# ARCHAEOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF SHARED HISTORY:

## A CASE STUDY OF ANCIENT KASHMIR



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# Introduction

Archaeology does not only constitute the sole source of the 99% of the total time of man on this planet and an important supplementary source of the period that followed invention of writing, but, more than that, it helps us to write a unitary history of mankind by throwing light on the origin, growth, diffusion and transmission of humans and their culture. Deeply pained by the disastrous consequences of perverted nationalism, which resulted into two heinous world wars, A. J. Toynbee embarked on the ambitious project of demolishing the Euro-centric view of history, employed by the colonial historians as an instrument to justify imperialism. And in this great human cause he was supported by archaeology. A meaningful universal view of history was possible only by bringing to focus the contributions made by different western and non-western cultures to the human civilization. Archaeology poured out profusely in favour of plural sources of human civilization which emboldened Toynbee to sail against the tide—a fact which he acknowledges radiantly.

It has been empirically proven that cultures have evolved and grown owing to plural causative factors having their origins both within and outside their local geographical borders. No culture is local *per se* instead every single culture constitutes a web of many cultures of which indigenous factor contributes but one thread. For constructing the history of a culture through this prism, archaeology is of immense value. The same holds true of Kashmir as well.

As is true of any other culture, Kashmiri culture is the product of both exogenous and endogenous factors; however, exogenous variable seems more powerful as the predominant technological and cultural items we find in Kashmir, have originated somewhere in the neighbouring civilizations, though to meet the local environment some slight modifications were no doubt made in Kashmir. And the source that unfolds this rewarding fact of our history is definitely none else than archaeology. It has been revealed by the archaeological sites of pre, proto and historical periods such as Burzahom, Gufkral, Semthan, Harwan, Kotabal, Hutmur, Hoinar, Gurwet, Dardkot, Ahan, Kanispora as well as by the sculpture and monuments of the period. Broadly speaking they show that the culture of Kashmir can be understood only if it is placed in the context of the great civilizations of ancient world namely, Chinese, Russian, Mediterranean, Greek, West Asian, Iranian, Central Asian and Indian. The great inventions, discoveries and philosophies, for which these civilizations are famous, were transmitted from their places of birth through the medium of hunt for greener pastures, empire building processes, network of exchange of goods and services, missionary zeal and diaspora forced by natural calamities and manmade disasters.

In the following chapters we have tried to delineate this fact by bringing to light the finds obtained from the archaeological sites excavated so far and identifying their sources of origin with the help of comparative archaeology and history. Since archaeology and history are supplementary and complementary to each other in making the facts to speak and working out a meaningful construct of human past, the first chapter of this work consists of Kashmir's relations with the neighbouring civilizations based on the information provided by written

records and archaeology so that the parallels established in the following chapters between the culture of Kashmir and the cultures of the neighbouring world become understandable.

**CHAPTER I**

# Kashmir's Contacts with the Neighbouring Civilizations

Kashmir, the northern most region of India though surrounded by a ring of mountain ramparts is endowed with a distinctive geographical advantage situated as it has been amidst the great civilizations of the ancient and medieval world with which it maintained contacts through a number of passes leading through its natural defenses. With China toward its east, Central Asia towards the north, Afghanistan and Iran towards northwest and Indian sub-continent towards its south and north, Kashmir became the meeting ground of the great civilizations - Chinese, Central Asian, West Asian and Indian civilizations. It is also true that these civilizations were themselves influenced by many other civilizations. In this way they collectively formed global civilization. Having been inextricably intertwined with the history of the neighbouring territories, the Kashmir culture cannot be understood without situating it with the civilizations that emerged on its borders from time to time.

There is more or less unanimity among the scientists that the Anatomically Modern Man (AMM) first actually appeared about 115,000 years ago in the archaeological record of South Africa. Beyond Africa he appeared in West Asia in 100000, in Australia in 65000 and in Sri Lanka, in 34000.[1] In the immediate neighbourhood of Kashmir the AMM first appeared in the Soan Valley (Western Punjab) between

[1]. Vide, Irfan Habib (ed.) *A Shared Heritage: The Growth of Civilization in India and Iran, Delhi,* p. X.

60000 and 20000 years ago.[2] The existence of modern human in Kashmir around 18000 years ago is fairly attested by the archaeological evidence.[3] Considering the much recent existence of AMM in Kashmir as compared to his appearance in the Soan Valley, it is logical to infer that the Anatomically Modern Man entered into Kashmir from the neighbouring Soan Valley. The continuity of cultural growth was, however, disrupted which is shown by the absence of the Mesolithic Culture.

It is believed that around 10000 BC cooler conditions prevailed in Kashmir. The period witnessed excessive rains forcing the people to move out.[4] And it was only after the climatic conditions improved around 5000 B.P. that Kashmir became habitable attracting the Neolithic people of the neighbouring territories to settle here. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Neolithic Culture which began in Kashmir around 2920 BC, presents a striking affinity with the Neolithic cultures of China, Russia, Iran, West Asia and Central Asia. Pit dwelling and bone tools of Kashmir Neolithic Culture had a long history in China, Russia, Central Asia and Iran;[5] many pottery types that we find in Kashmir

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[2]. B. R. Allchin, "Early Traces of Man in the Potwar Plateau, Pakistan, A Report of the British Archaeological Mission", *South Asian Studies,* Vol. 2, 1986, pp. 69-83.

[3]. Shali, S. L, *Kashmir - History and Archaeology Through the Ages,* New Delhi, I 993, p. 57; D. P. Aggarwal, 'Forward' to *Central Asia and Western Himalayas - A forgotten Link,* ed. By G.M. Buth, Jodhpur (India), 1986.

[4]. Rekha Dodia et al, "New Pollen Data from the Kashmir Bogs": A Summary in Climate and Geology of Kashmir, *The Evolution of the East Asian Environment,* Ed. R.D Whyt, Vol. II, 1984,p. 105.

[5]. A. L. Mongait, Archaeology of USSR, pp. 91, 92, 109, 1 12; A. Bryusov, "Neolithic Dwellings in the forest Zone of the European part of the USSR". *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society.*Vol. XXI, pp. 78-79. P. Singh, *The Neolithic Culture of Western Asia,* London, 1976, pp. 166-167.

Neolithic have parallels in China and Iran;[6] the perforated stone harvesters found at Neolithic Guflkral originated in China;[7] dog burial (of Neolithic Burzahom) was a common practice in China;[8] red-painted burials found at Burzahom have parallels in China, Japan, Russia and West Asia;[9] the hair pin that we found at Gufkral actually originated in the Mediterranean world and spread to Persian Gulf, Caucasus to the Indus;[10] the Neolithic crops of Kashmir namely wheat, barley, lentil, pea, almond, walnuts, peach, apricot originated in China, Central Asia and West Asia.[11]

In the immediate neighbourhood of Kashmir all these aspects of Kashmir Neolithic have been found in Potwar Plateau, Swat Valley, Gomal Valley, and Baluchistan.[12] There is so much affinity between the

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6. T. Chang, Archaeology in China, Vol. [ (Prehistoric China), Cambridge, 1959, pp. 57, 61, 80, 92, 100, 125, 130, 131, 139, 143, 149.; H.D. Sankalia, *Prehistory in India,* New Delhi, 1975, p. 167; *Indian'Archaeology : A Review,* 1981-82, p. 25.

7. Chang, op. cit., pp. 97, 107, 115, 130-31, 137, 145.

8. Loewe and Shaughnessy (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Ancient China,* 1999, pp. 360, 162, 166, 167, 170, 178, 184, 189, 192, 196, 219-20, 225, 479, 727, 916, 918, 927.

9. T. Chang, op.cit., pp. 42, 81; *The Prehistory of Japan,* New York, 195 1, p.66: Singh, op. cit., pp. 100,150.; James Mellart, *The Neolithic Cultures of Near East, London,* 1975, pp.190, 191; F. Hole and Flannery, "Excavations at Ali Kosh Iran 1961" in *Iranica Antiqiia,* Vol. 2, pp. 97- 148.

10. Stuart Piggot, "Notes on Certain metal Pins and a Mace Head in the Harappan Culture," in *Ancient India,* No.4, pp. 27- 32.

11. Charles A. Reed, " The Pattern of Animal Domestication in the Prehistoric Near East," in P.J. Ucko and G.W. Dimbleby. (eds.), *Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals,* London, pp. 361- 80; Braidwood et al, "The Iranian Prehistoric Project," in *Science; V.* Mellaart, *Excavations at Hacilar,* p. 239; D.H. French et al, "Excavations at Can Hasan III 1969-70," in E. Higgs (ed.), Paper in *Economic Prehistory,* pp. 180-90; J.F. Jarriage and R.H. Meadow,. "The Antecedents of Cultivation in the Indus Valley," in *Scientific America,* 243 (2), 1980, pp. 122-23, 132: *Palaeoethnobotany*, op.cit., p. 140,144, 146,203; and *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan,* New Delhi, 1983, p.115.

12. Stacul, G (1977), Dwelling and Storage pits at Loebanr III (Swat, Pakistan) 1976 Excavation Report" in *East and West,* Vol. 27, pp. 229-235.; Fairservis (1956), "Excavations in the Quetta Valley, Western Pakistan," in *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History,* Vol. 45, p. 233; Dani (1970-71), "Excavations in the Gomal Valley," in *Ancient Pakistan,* No. 5, pp. 84-85; Bridget Allchin and Raymond

Neolithic culture of Kashmir and the Neolithic cultures of Potwar region and Swat Valley that Allichins consider them belonging "to a single complex".[13] This shows clearly that the earliest settlers of Kashmir came from north and north-west neighbourhood of Kashmir. This is also substantiated by the Kashmiri language and the earliest known religious cult of Kashmir (Naga cult). According to the eminent linguist, Sir George Garrison, Kashmiri language belongs to the Dardic group of languages spoken in the vast area that boarders Kashmir's north and northwest.[14] According to the available evidence Naga worship was in vogue from Khotan through Chilas to Punjab since very early times.[15]

Around 1500 B.C. another wave of immigrations and settlements is substantiated by the presence of a new culture alongside the old one. The new culture is underlined by Megaliths, cist graves, iron, rubble structures and rice and millet cultivations.[16] Such developments- multi-cropping system, stone walled houses, rectangular stones, sickles in Swat around 700 BC have been explained in the context of wide ranging cultural exchanges including immigrations particularly of Indo-Aryans.[17] The same may hold true of Kashmir as well. The period I of Semthan has revealed grey ware along with other types of wares.[18]Archaeologists call it Pre-Northern Black Polished Ware, i.e. the ware which is

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Allchin, op. cit., p. 115-16, 163-; Stacul. "Swat, Pirak and connected Problems (Mid 2nd millennium B.C.), in *South Asian Archaeology, 1989,* p*. 268.*

13. Bridget Allchin and Raymond Allchin, op. cit., p. 116.
14. George Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India,* Vol. 8, Part II, p. 253.
15. A. H. Dhani, *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan,* National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Islambad, Pakistan, 1989, p. 484, pl. 4; *Chilas,* Islamabad, 1983, p. 53, pl. 34.
16. Aman Ashraf Wani, *Exogeneous Influences in Kashmir from Neolithic Times to the Beginning of Christian Era,* M. Phil. dissertation (unpublished) CCAS, University of Kashmir, pp. 101-108.
17. Giorgio Stacul, "Swat, Pirak and connected problems (mid 2nd millennium B.C.)" in *South Asian Archaeology,* 1989, p. 268.
18. *Indian Archaeological Review,* 1980-81, p. 32.

encountered in India during the Aryan phase. Recently a site named Dard Kot has been spotted on the highest terrace of Village Hutmur overlooking the river Lidder. An important discovery was of plain grey ware which, as we know, is anterior to painted grey ware.[19] A later work *Nilamatapurana*, canonical work of Kashmiri Brahmans , written in seventh or eighth century, also records the arrival of Aryans though it is clothed in folklore and informed by the dominant tradition Brahmanism.[20] As Megaliths originated in Mediterranean[21] and rice, millet and grapes originated in China,[22] and Iron in West Asia,[23]the Aryan Culture was obviously a syncretic culture drawn from various civilizations including their homeland namely Central Asia.

In 516 B.C. Dairus, the Achaemenian ruler of Iran, extended his empire upto India by annexing Sindh and Gandhara (North West frontier and the parts of Punjab). We learn from the Greek Sources that at that time of Iranian invasion Kashmir was a part of Gandhara.[24] As the Iranians ruled over these territories upto Alexander's invasion of India in 326 BC, it would suggest that Achaemenian rule continued in Kashmir for about 200 years paving the way for huge Iranian influences. It would be significant to mention that the Achaemenians introduced writing in India, and also their script Aramaic. The Kharoshti script, which became

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19. Asha Hanley, "Kists in Kashmir," in *Times of India Magazine, December 2, 1979.* For details about "Gandhara Grave Culture," See C. Silvi Antonini and G. Stacul*, The Prehistoric Graveyards of Swat,* 2 Vol's. Rome, 1972; A.H. Dani et al, "Timargarha and Gandhara culture," Ancient Pakistan, No. 3, 1967.

20. *Nilmatapurana* ed. and Tr. By Ved Kumari, Vol2, 1973, pp.55 sqq.

21. Philip Van Doren Stern, *Prehistoric Europe*, pp. 247-258.

22. Richard S. Mac Neish and Jane Libby (eds.), preliminary report of the sino-American Jiangxi origin of rice agriculture project (draft copy), publication in *Anthropology,* No. 13, University of Taxes at E.J. Paso, 1995 Vide. *The Cambridge History of Ancient China, 1999, p. 46; T. Chang op. cit., pp87-95.*; *The Cambridge History of Ancient China op. cit.,* p*. 45.*

23. N. R. Banerjee, *Iron Age in India,* p. 106.

24. *Milinda Panha,* p. 331.

common in Kashmir was also carved out of Aramaic. The Persian influence is also marked in various aspects of Indian polity and culture including the profound influence of Zoroastrianism of which we find deep imprints on the culture of ancient Kashmir.[25]

Towards the beginning of third century BC the mighty Mauryan empire emerged on the boarders of Kashmir which extended upto eastern Afghanistan. All the extant sources namely Greek records, Milinda Panha and Buddhist texts unanimously say that at this time Kashmir and Gandhara formed one political entity.[26] It is, therefore, quite logical to say that Kashmir became the part of the Mauryan empire with its occupation of Gandhara. This is further substantiated by the famous Kashmiri chronicle *Rajatarangini* and the archaeological evidences. It is remarkable to note that Ashoka is the first historical figure mentioned by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*.[27] The famous archaeological site, Semthan has yielded two important traits of Mauryan culture namely Punch Marked Coins and Northern Black Polished Ware.[28] That Ashoka ruled Kashmir is also corroborated by Hieun Tsang (625 A.D) who saw Ashokan stupas in the Valley.[29] The Mauryan influences resulted into the intensive use of Iron, promotion of rich culture, introduction of Northern Black Polished Ware, Punch Marked Coins, popularization of Kharoshti script, beginning of urbanism (Srinagar was built by Ashoka), organisation of elaborate

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25. For details see, Aman Ashraf Wani op. cit., p.
26. *Milinda Panha, op. cit.,;* Ray Chaudhary, *Political History of Ancient India,* p. 103.; Nilinaksha Dutt, *Buddhism in Kashmir,* Delhi, p.5.
27. Kalhana, *Rajatarangni,* Tr. M.A. Stein, Book I, vs, 101-106.
28. *Indian Archaeology A Review,* 1978-79, p.70; 1980-81, p. 21; 1981-82, p. 16;
29. *Si-Yu-Ki,* Tr. Beal, 1, p.150.

system of administration and last but not least Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir during the period of Ashoka.[30]

From about 200 BC to the first half of the 6th century A.D. i.e. for about 700 years Kashmir was successively occupied by Bacterian Greeks, Sakas, Parthians, Kushans, Kidarites and Huns. This is sufficiently corroborated by both the archaeological and literary evidence. During this long period of intimate contact with Central Asia, Kashmir underwent a remarkable development not only because it was integrated with an international market but also because it was greatly benefited by the great civilization which emerged in Central Asia on account of the synthesis of the most developed civilizations of the time namely Chinese, Greek, Iranian and Indian. This is evident from a huge material evidence revealed by a host of archaeological sites such as Semthan, Harwan, Ushkur, Hoinar, Hutmur, Doen pather, Kanispora etc.[31] Additional evidence in this regard is provided by numismatics, written sources, word fund of Kashmiri language, and place names.[32] Following the immigrations and settlements of the people from neighbouring world and the network of interactions there was hardly any aspect which remained uninfluenced.[33]What is perhaps more significant is that Kashmiri culture became a mini global culture.

This is evident from the Harwan tiles which according to Percy Brown, "represent half a dozen ancient civilizations besides the other indigenous cultures".[34] That the Central Asian empires which extended

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30. For details see, Aman Ashraf Wani, op. cit., pp. 137-139.
31. For details see, R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,* Srinagar; Ajaz Banday, *Early Terracotta Art of Kashmir:* 1st -3rd century A.D; S.L. Shali, *Kashmir: Archaeology and History through the Ages.*
32. For details see, Aman Ashraf Wani, op. cit.,
33. Ibid.
34. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu),* p. 154.

their control over Kashmir essentially represented a syncretic civilization is also typically shown by Kushan coinage where we find the different deities belonging to Greek, Roman, Iranian, Central Asian and Indian pantheons.[35] Apart from making significant additions to the already ethnically and culturally mosaic society of Kashmir, Kashmir's technology, economy and culture received an unprecedented boost in the wake of integration of the valley with the highly advanced civilizations. It is interesting to know that the Kashmiri masses became familiar with the money currency for the first time during this period. This is evident from the Kashmiri word *diyar* used for money currency. *Diyar* is the Kashmirized version of Greek *dinarus*. The democratization of money currency was obviously the result of the unprecedented growth of Kashmir's external trade. That Kashmir's technology was greatly benefited by its contacts with the neighbouring civilizations, Harwan site presents a vivid evidence.[36]

During the Kushan period Kashmir became a great centre of Buddhism so much so that it attracted Kanishka to convene Fourth World Buddhist Council in Kashmir in which, according to Hieun Tsang, hundreds of Buddhist savants participated.[37]

Kashmir's pre-eminence as great centre of Buddhist learning survived for centuries together. Even though in the early 6th century A.D Buddhists of Kashmir and the North-West of India faced worst persecution at the hands of Meharkul,[38] and despite the ascendency of Brahmanism in Kashmir from then onwards, Kashmir continued to be a

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35. See, Shazia Shafiq Jan, *Kashmir Under the Kushans,* (unpublished) Ph.D Thesis Department of History, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, pp. 78-108.
36. Ibid.
37. Beal, Samuel, *Si-Yu-Ki, Buddhist Records of the Western world,* pp. 151-55.
38. *Rajatarangini,* op. cit., vs, 312, 316; Also see, *Si-Yu-Ki,* op. cit., 168, 171.

centre of Buddhist learning at least for two-three centuries i.e. upto eighth century A.D. Not surprisingly, therefore, the famous Chinese pilgrims, Hieun Tsang (631-33) and Ou'kong (759 AD) came to Kashmir to learn at the feet of Kashmiri Buddhist scholars.

From sixth century A.D. Kashmir emerged as a great political power. *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana gives us a glowing account of the conquests made by the Hun rulers of Kashmir.[39] Some of them are even credited to have reached up to the deep South and to Bengal in the east.[40] Notwithstanding the exaggerations there is no denying the fact that before the Karkotas Kashmir had emerged a great empire. According to the Chinese Annals, Kashmiri rulers controlled the route from China to Ki-pin (Kabul) around 627 AD.[41] Hieun tsang also found all the adjacent territories on the west and north, down to the Taksasila, Hazara, Salt rang and smaller hill states as tributaries of Kashmir in 631 AD.[42] Certainly, the emergence of Kashmir as a great empire was the handiwork of Huns which they bequeathed to the Karkotas who maintained the tradition as true heirs of their great ancestors. The founder of Karkota dynasty, Durlabhavardhana was the son-in-law of the last Hun ruler of Kashmir, Baladatya. He had served as an official in the court of Baladitya.[43]

It is in place to mention here that whereas prior to 6th century A.D Kashmir remained more gravitated to Central Asia, the situation changed then onwards as we find Kashmir being equally influenced by Indian culture. Although the Huns belonged to Central Asia they, while

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39. *Rajatarangini,* op. cit., Book III.
40. Ibid.
41. Cunninghum, *Coins of Medieval India,* p. 38.
42. *Si-yu-Ki,* op. cit., I, pp. 136, 143, 147, 163.
43. *Rajatarangini,* op. cit., v, 489.

remaining in the Indian environment, were thoroughly influenced by the Indian culture which is evident from their personal names. Little wonder then that we find either Saivism or Vaisnavism as the dominant religious traditions of Kashmir.[44] The profound Indian influence is also evident from the archaeological and numismatics evidence.

The Karkotas (620-855) expanded the boundaries of Kashmir empire beyond any precedent in the history of Kashmir. Kalhana gives a hyperbolic account of the conquest of the great Karkota ruler, Lalitaditya, yet there is no doubt that he defeated Yasuvarman, the famous ruler of Kanauj, and brought all the immediate neighbouring territories under his control.[45] Certainly, during the period of Lalitaditya Kashmir emerged the greatest power in the whole of northern India. As a result, there was a great influx of talent from the neighbouring world making Kashmir a famous seat of learning and a great centre of hybrid civilization.[46] Lalitaditya's Prime Minister was a Tukharian Buddhist, Cankun by name,[47] and the five high offices which were newly instituted by the king were manned by 'the Sahis and other princess'.[48] The outstanding progress which Kashmir achieved on account of the streaming of men of learning from the neighbouring world is evident from the world famous Martand temple constructed by Lalitaditya which puzzle even the modern mind. The foreign styles which played a major role in the development of Kashmiri stone architecture filtered through west Asia.[49] For example, Kashmir owes to Iran for a very

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[44]. Ibid, op. cit., Book III
[45]. Ibid., Book IV, 131 sqq.
[46]. Ibid., Book IV, vs. 245.
[47]. Ibid., vs. 246.
[48]. Ibid., vs. 142-43.
[49]. Robert E. Fisher, "Stone Temples" in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.) *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir,* 1989, p. 29.

important architectural feature namely formation of intersecting cross-members best known as 'lantern' sealing derived from wooden models introduced by the Parthians in the north-west.[50] About the Awantiswarmin temple built by Avantivarman (855-883) Robert E. Fisher says, "Nearly all the pilasters are decorated with a rich variety of motifs, some native of India others reflecting West-Asian tastes as found upon Sassanian silver: i.e. roundels that enclose lotuses, geese, mythical creatures, paired humans, birds and flowers as well as numerous geometrical patterns".[51]

Equally, rather more, significant is to see Kashmir becoming a reputed centre of dialogic tradition attracting the scholars of different beliefs to put across their respective views. On the authority of a contemporary Muslim chronicler we know that during the Karkota dynasty, Kashmir had become an important intellectual centre where "Hindus and Turkish Buddhists of the neighbouring and allied states of Gandhara mingled with foreign scholars".[52] From the beginning of the eleventh century Kashmir saw another major wave of immigrations and settlements. Following the installation of a ruler from Loharin (Poonch) giving birth to Lohara dynasty which ruled upto 1339. There was a streaming of people from Lohara promoted by the state to build a strong local supporting structure. The rule of Loharins also accounted for further cementing of relations between Kashmir and Kabul for the Loharas had matrimonial relations with the Shahi dynasty. It is, therefore, understandable to see the members of the Shahi dynasty seeking refuge in Kashmir after they were vanquished by Mahmud of

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50. Ibid., p. 38.
51. Ibid., p. 40.
52. Vide, Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj,* Eng. Tr. From the French by Herbert Masson, Vol. I, entitled, *The Life of al-Hallaj,* pp. 178-180.

Ghaznavi. The Kashmiri rajas did not only grant refuge to them but also appointed them to high positions.[53] Besides the members of the ruling dynasty, Al-Biruni also mentions the other people of Kabul, Gandhara, and Punjab seeking shelter in Kashmir following the conquest of North-west of India by Ghaznavids.[54]

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53. *Rajatarangini*, op. cit, Book VII, vs. 144 sqq.
54. Al-Biruni, *Kitah al-Hind,* tr. Ecschau, vol. I, p. 22.

**CHAPTER II**

# Neolithic Culture of Kashmir and its Parallels

The Kashmir valley possesses a rich and widely established Neolithic culture. This is substantiated by dozens of Neolithic sites found at different nooks of the valley.[55] However among them only two sites have been excavated so far. These are Burzahom and Gufkral. Burzahom site is situated in the east of Srinagar on the Yanderhom Karewa near the foot of Mahadev Mountain and is about 1.5 km away from the Dal Lake. This site was first excavated on a small scale by Hellmut De Terra in 1935. However it was between 1960-71 that the site was excavated extensively by T. N. Khazanchi[56]. The Gufkral site is situated near Tral town in district Pulwama some 41 km south east of Srinagar. The site was first reported in 1962-63 by the Archaeological

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55. Burzahom (Srinagar), Nunar (Gandarbal), Baimlun village (Wangath Nallah in the Sindh valley), Begund, Gofkral, Hariparigom, Dadsar, Jayadevi Udar and Thajiwor (tehsil Tral, district Pulwama), Olichibagh, Pampore, Panzgom and sempor (tehsil Pampore, district Pulwama), Damodar Udar (10 kms south west of Srinagar), Kanalwan (Bijbehara) Gurhoma Sangri (near Wular Lake, Srinagar Bandipora road), Brah and Waztal (near Martand Temple in Anantnag) , Singpore, Petha Gantamula and Kanishpora (tehsil and district Baramulla), Khor and Pattan (tehsil Pattan, district Baramulla), Dillion, Palapur and Gordan at Parihaspora (Pattan), Kijpora (Sind Valley), Haribous (Tral), Borus (Avantipora), Kaneer and Aripathan (Budgam), Balapur (shopian), Romu (Pakharpur), Shah Pend (Pampore), Hayatpur, Khansahib and koshund (Biru tehsil), kulador (Baramulla), Bomai (Sopore). Thaper, B.K., "Fresh Light on the Neolithic Cultures of India: Archaeological Perspective of India Since Independence," in *Puratattva*, No. 13-14, p.37.

56. *Indian Archaeology-A Review* (IAR), 1960-61, 1961-62, 1962-63, 1964-65, 1965-66, 1966-67, 1968 - 69, 1971-72, 1973-74; Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *Birth of civilization*, England 1968, p.158.

Survey of India and excavations were conducted in 1981 and 1982 by K. D. Banerjee and A. K. Sharma of the Archaeological Survey of India.[57]

Both the sites revealed a successive sequence of cultures on the basis of which the cultural deposits of these sites have been divided into the following periods:

1. Aceramic Neolithic
2. Ceramic Neolithic I
3. Ceramic Neolithic II
4. Megalithic period
5. Early historical period

According to the latest researches the Aceramic Neolithic started around 2990 BC and continued up to 2500 BC. The ceramic Neolithic I continued up to around 2000 BC and the Neolithic ceramic II continued up to 1700 B.C.[58]

## Salient features of the different phases of the Neolithic culture

### *Phase I: Aceramic Neolithic (2900-2500 BC)*

The stratigraphical layers belonging to the period from 2800-2500 B.C. were devoid of pottery hence the cultural stage was aceramic in nature[59]. On the basis of the finds of this period the archaeologists and prehistoric scientists have come to the conclusion that it was around 2900 BC that man started domestication of agriculture in Kashmir. This

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57. IAR-1981-82,1982-83; A.K. Sharma, 'Excavations at Gufkral, 1981' in *Purunttava*, Indian Archaeological Society, New Delhi, No. 11.
58. G. L. Possehl and R. C. Rissman, *India-Chronologies in Old World Archaeology,* Vol. I, p.480.
59. S .S. Saar, *Archaeology: The Ancestors of Kashmi*r, New Delhi, 1992 p.17 and R.K. Pant, IAS and ISQS, 1981.

conclusion is based on the cereal remains found at this cultural level[60]. Among the cereal remains grains of wheat, barley, and lentils were recovered. However this does not mean that the human beings completely parted ways with the age old practice of hunting and food gathering. This is substantiated by the fact that alongside grain remains bones of many wild animals namely Ibex, Bear, Wolf and Stag have also been recovered from this level of the Neolithic period[61]. The domestication of agriculture was accompanied by the domestication of animals. The animals domesticated were sheep, goat and cattle[62]. Like other Neolithic cultures we also find ground tools fashioned on stone and bone. The stone tools made by the people of this phase of Neolithic culture comprised axes, drills, picks, points, pestles, pounders, querns and mace heads[63] (pl. 3, fig. 7). The bone tools encountered during this period are points, needles, harpoons and scrappers[64] (pl. 6, fig. 19, 20, 21, 22). Another important feature of this culture was that the people lived in underground pits which were circular, oval, rectangular or square (pl. 1, fig.1,2,3). These, what may be called earth houses were dug on the *karewa's* (*udars*). However during this phase no pottery has been found. This is why it is called aceramic phase.

***Phase II: Ceramic Neolithic* (*A*)**
***(2500-2000)***

This period is marked by dominant continuities, i.e. the old culture continued in terms of crop and animal raising, hunting, tool

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60. G.M. Buth and R.N. Kaw, "Plant Husbandry in Neolithic Burzahom, Kashmir", in *Climate and Geology of Kashmir and Central Asia, The last 4 million years*, New Delhi, 1985, PP. 109-113.
61. Naseem Ahmad, *The Neolithic Cultures of North Western Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*, New Delhi, 1982, p.174.
62. Op cit., p. 175.
63. Ibid; p. 176;
64. IAR-1960-61, to 1973-74.

making and pit dwelling. However a few additions were made during this period which marks it out from the earlier phase. Among the new developments mention may be made of the introduction of handmade pottery, as we for the first time come across different potteries namely thick coarse grey ware, fine grey ware and gritty dull red ware[65]. The main pottery types include long necked jars, bowls and basins (pl. 5, fig. 15, 16, 17). The bowls and basins are characterized by ring or disc basis. On the basis of these parts are mat impressed designs. During this period we find the presence of dog suggesting the domestication of this animal along with the other animals domesticated from the first phase. We also find some new crops namely pea, peach, walnut and apricot.[66]

### *Phase III: Ceramic Neolithic* (*B*)
### *(2000-1700)*

This phase is characterized by some far reaching developments in every sphere of life. For example we find that the people abandoned the underground pit and chamber dwelling instead made over ground houses made of wood, mud, bricks or both[67]. Besides the traditional livestock we now find pig and horse also being domesticated. Similarly we find some new fruit crops namely grapes, vine and almond being cultivated[68]. Some new stone tools namely double hold harvesters and spindle whorls are encountered for the first time during this period (pl. 6, fig. 23). Although stone objects are less prolific during this period bone tools were still in much demand and were better finished. The important tools made were arrow heads, harpoons, awls etc (pl. 6, fig. 19-22). Apart from earlier pottery types we also find some new introductions namely

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65. Sharma, A.K., *Puratattva*,1982.
66. Farooq. A. Lone, Maqsooda Khan and G. M. Bhat, *Palaeoethonobotany*, p. 8.
67. *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1961-62,P.9
68. Sankalia, op. cit., pp. 300-303; *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1968-69, p. 1-10.

long necked jars and dish on stand with triangular perforated designs on stem region. A significant development of this period was the introduction of potter's wheel as we find a red ware painted pot with the depiction of a horned figure.[69](pl. 4, fig 12).

We also find people making use of beads fashioned out of agate and carnelian[70]. The people of this phase also demonstrated an appreciable artistic activity as is shown by two broken stone pieces with engravings; one piece depicts a hunting scene in which a stag is being attacked by two persons- from the rear with a long spear and in the front with an arrow. The upper portion of the slab depicts the two rising suns and a dog [71](pl. 6, fig. 25).

Burzhom has yielded interesting information about the burial practices for the first time in the history of Kashmir. The burials are both of humans and animals (pl. 2, fig. 4, 5, 6). The graves pits were dug either beneath the dwelling pits or nearby. The burials were both primary and secondary[72]. Archaeologists have also found burial goods such as pottery, animals, precious stones etc. showing that people had faith in the life after death. The dead bodies were balmed with red ochre.[73]

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[69]. T.N. Khazanchi and K.N. Dikshit, 'The Grey Ware Culture of Northern Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, *Puratattva* No.9, 1980, P.49.

[70]. IAR, 1964-65;

[71]. *Indian Archaeology - A Review* (IAR), 1964-65 and IAR, 1965-66; B.M. Pande, "Neolithic Hunting Scene on a Stone Slab from Burzahom Kashmir", in *Asian Perspective*, Vol. XIV, 1971, pp.194-98; and B.M. Pande, "Tectiform from Burzahom, district Srinagar Kashmir", *Journal of Indian Anthropological Society*, Vol.7, 1972, pp. 175-77.

[72]. A.K. Sharma, 'Neolithic Human Burials from Burahom Kashmir; *Journal of Oriental Institute of Baroda*, Vol. XVI No. 3, 1967, pp.239-42; IAR, 1962-63; A. Basu and A. Pal, *Human Remains from Burzahom*, p.3.

[73]. A.K. Sharma, 'Neolithic Human Burials from Burzahom, Kashmir; *Journal of Oriental Institute of Baroda*, Vol. XVI No. 3, 1967

We also find some metallic items which of course were intrusive from the neighbouring Harappan culture among these metallic objects mention may be made of a few copper arrow heads, a ring, bangles and a hair pin.[74]

## Parallels Between Kashmir Neolithic and the Neighbouring world

A significant feature of the Neolithic Kashmir, when read together with the Neolithic cultures of the neighbouring civilizations is that it helps us to write a unitary view of human society in that we find striking affinities between the culture of Kashmir and other Neolithic cultures. This can be substantiated in detail below:

1. ***Pit dwelling:*** The archaeologists have discovered many sites in China, Russia central Asia and west Asia where people lived in pits. The important sites in China are Lung-ma, Chinapong, Yang-Shao I, Pai-Sha-Sheng, His & Yin-T Sun, Pan-pot'sun, Ma-chia yao, Huangho, and Lung Shan[75]. In Russia pit dwelling has been encountered at Gagarino, Talmaskaya, Pushkari I, Karelia, Tripole, Panfilova, Kalamatskii, Eberstadit, Frauenberg, Pushsovkhoz, Voi-Novolok, Gavrilovka[76]. In Japan dwelling pits have been found at Kurohoma Hills and Chiba, Higashilasizuka, Shell mound of Yagayato and Orimato Ubayama and Dai, Horinouchi and Shinpukuji[77]. West Asia has also the history of subterranean houses

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[74]. T.N. Khazanchi and K.N. Dikshit op. cit., Vol.9, 1979, p. 49.

[75]. K.C. Chang, the Archaeology of Ancient China (A.B. P.253) New Heaven,1968, pp. 131-175.

[76]. Alexander Mongait, Archaeology in USSR, London 1961, pp. 91-122; A Bryuson, Neolithic dwellings in the forest zone of thee European part of the USSR', Proceeding of the Prehistoric Society, New Series, Vol. 21, Cambridge, 1952, pp. 78-79.

[77]. G.J. Groote, *The Prehistory of Japan*, New York, 1951, pp. 37-69.

found at Beidha(Levant), Abu Zureiq[78], Ramand (Levant)[79], M'Lefaat (Iraq)[80], Tepe Asiab (Iran), Tepe Sarab (Iran)[81]. In the immediate neighborhood earth houses have been found at Sarai Kola 1, Lobianar and Levan[82].

2. ***Red ochreous painted floors:*** We have seen that the floors of the Neolithic sites were painted with red ochre. The use of red ochre for floors has been found at Hacilar (Turkey)[83], Can Hassan (Turkey), Deh Luranplain (Iran) Beidha, Levand, Depe and Chakmaklidepe (Turkmania)[84] and at Mehrgarh (Baluchistan)[85].
3. ***Bone tools:*** Bone tools which have been found throughout the Neolithic culture of Kashmir, have their long history, much before Kashmir in China, Russia, Japan, West Asia, Afghanistan and in the neighbouring northwest frontier[86]. At China bone tools have been found during Lung Shan culture at Shensi, Shansi, Honan, Hopei, Hupei, Liaoning, Fukein, Taiwan, Kwantung and Shantung , Yang Shaeo culture at Yang-Shaeo-tun, Pan-post'sun Mien-chin-Hsien. And during Ang Ang His culture at Yuan-Shan, Hsiao-T'un[87]. In Russia the bone tools were found at Kangool (river Kinem)

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78. Prushotum Sing, *The Neolithic Cultures of Near East*, London, 1974, pp. 22, 48-49.
79. Ibid, p. 48
80. James. Mallart, *The Neolithic Cultures of Near East*, London, 1975, p. 74.
81. Prushotum Sing, op cit., pp. 166-77.
82. G. Stachul, "Dwelling and storage pits at Loebanr III (Swat, Pakistan),1976, Excavation Report" in *East and West*, vol. 27, Rome, 1977, pp.229-35.
83. J. Mellaart (1975), *Excavations at Hacliar*, 2. Vols, Vide Shashi Asthana, *Pre-Harappan Cultures of India and the Borderlands*, p. 25; P. Singh, *The Neolithic Culture of Western Asia*, pp. 68, 105,186.
84. S.P. Gupta (1979), *Archaeology of Soviet Central Asia and Indian Borderlands*, vide Asthana, op. cit., p 35; Masson and Sarianidi (1972), *Central Asia: Turkmenia Before the Achaeminids*, p. 36.
85. Jarriage and Lechevallier, "Excavations at Mehrgarh – Baluchistan: Their significance in the Pre-historical context of the Indo-Pakistan Borderland" (Ed. M. Taddel), in *South Asian Archaeology*, (1979), VI, pp. 463-535.
86. Ibid; E. J. Ross, "A Chalcolithic Site in Northern Blauchistan", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* 1946, p. 296.
87. Chang, Op. cit., pp. 66, 90, 94, 131

Charozero (river Moldon), Serovsky (lake Baikal)[88]; in Japan at Youkohama, Horinouchi culture Omori culture, Angyo culture, Kamegaokara culture[89]; in West Asia at Jarmo[90]; in Central Asia at Djeitun[91]; in Afghanistan at Aq Kuprruk I and II[92] and in north west frontier of India at Mehrgrah 1, Killi Kul Muhamad , Rana Gundi, Sarai Kola and Jalil Pur[93].

4. ***Stone tools:*** The stone tools namely adzes, axes, drills, picks, points, pestles, pounders, qurns and ring stones have been found in almost all the sites of the neighbouring civilizations and cultures. However, the rectangular and the semi lunar polished stone knives also called harvesters, are chiefly found in northern China, where about a dozen sites have yielded similar objects[94].
5. ***Crops:*** It is a well established fact that West Asia (Iran and Iraq) has been the home of wheat and barley where it was grown not later than 7600 B.C.[95] Its technology reached to Turkey around 6740 B.C. In Mehrgrah (Blouchistan) wheat and barley cultivation began about 6-5th millennium B.C.[96] Lentil and pea cultivation began in West Asia

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88. Mongait, op. cit., pp. 100-101.
89. Groote, op. cit., pp. 37, 38, 61, 62, 65, 68.
90. K. Solecki and L. Rose, "Two Bone Hafts from Northern Iraq", in *Antiquity*, Vol. 43, PP. 311-14; Braidwood and Howe, *Prehistoric Investigations in Iraqi Kurdistan*, Chicago,1960: Braidwood and Braidwood, "Jarmo, A Village of Early Farmers in Iraq," in *Antiquity*, Vol. 24. pp. 189-95.
91. V.M. Masson and V. I. Sarianidi, *Central Asia: Turkmenia before the Achaemendis*, New York, 1972.
92. Ibid.
93. Naseem Ahmad, *The Neolithic Cultures of North Western Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent*, Delhi, 1982.
94. K.C. Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*.
95. J.M. Renfrew, *Palaeoethnobotany: The Pre-historic Food Plants of Near-East and Europe*, London, 1973.
96. Constantin, "The Beginning of Agriculture in the Kachi Plains: The Evidence of Mehrgarh," in B. Allichin (ed.) *South Asian Archaeology*, 1981, pp. 29-33.

at about 8500 B.C.[97] Grapes were cultivated at Mehrgrah towards the beginning of 3rd millennium B.C.[98] Peach is believed to have originated in western China,[99] almond in central and west Asia[100] and apricot in western China. [101]

6. ***Pottery:*** The Neolithic pottery of Kashmir has some similarities with the pottery of China namely mat or basket impressions[102]. In this respect there is so close affinity between Kashmir and China that some scholars considered Kashmir Neolithic as an extension of Neolithic China. Another significant discovery of the Neolithic Kashmir is the presence of a pot with the motif of a wild goat with long curved horns (pl. 4, fig. 12). It has originated from Hisar (Iran) and is found at almost all the pre Harappan sites namely *Kot Diji*, *Sarai Kola*, *Gumla*, *Levan* and *Rehman Dheri*[103]. The channel spouted vessel found at Gufkral has a long history in western Asia and Iran[104].
7. ***Copper hair pin:*** The copper hair pin encountered at Gufkral Neolithic has been found from Mediterranean through Caucasus to Indus[105]. Having originated in the Mediterranean regions it spread to

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97. Durrani, "Indus Civilization : Evidence West of Indus," in A. H. Dani (ed.) *Indus Civilization: New Perspective*, 1981, pp. 134-35; Allchin and Allchin, p. 115.
98. Jarrige and Meadow, "The Antecedents of Civilization of Indus Valley", *Scientific American,* 1980, Vol. 243, no 2, p. 132.
99. N. A. Vavilov, op.cit.
100. J. M. Renfrew, *Palaeoethnobotany*, op.cit., p. 144.
101. Ibid.
102. Chang, Op. cit., pp. 57, 61, 80, 92, 100, 125, 130, 131, 139, 143, 149.
103. H.D. Sankalia, *Prehistory in India*, p. 169; also see Sankalia, "Iranian Influences on Early Indo-Pakistan Cultures" in Amlender Guhaced, *Central Asia* pp. 55-56.
104. Ibid.
105. Stuart Piggot, "Notes on Certain Metal Pins and a Mace Head in the Harappan culture," in *Ancient India*, No .4 pp. 27-32.

Hisar 3 (Iran), *Anau* (Turkestan), and Mohenjo-Daro, Chanhudaro, Jhukr and Manda[106].

8. ***Burial Customs:*** During the mature Neolithic period of Kashmir we have found some noticeable burial customs namely primary and secondary burial, dead being buried under the house floor, painting of Skelton and animal burials. In this respect Kashmir has similarities with Iran, Russia, Central Asia and China. For example in Iran we find dead being buried under the house floor and the burials being both primary and secondary types[107]. The painting of skelton with red ochre is an old tradition in Russia[108]. Many red painted burials have also been reported from Iran, Lavant, Anatolia, China and Japan[109]. Animal burials have also been reported from China and Central Asia[110]. The goat burial of Kashmir has affinity in the neighbouring Afghanistan[111]. And the dog burial was a wide spread cultural trait of China[112].

Indeed the Neolithic culture of Kashmir is an extension of the Neolithic cultures of China, Russia, Central Asia and West Asia. Yet the immediate border lands of Kashmir situated on its northern and western borders acted as mediators between Kashmir and the great civilizations. In that Kashmir imported these cultural traits not directly from the great centre's but through its borderlands where this culture had already taken deep roots. This is the reason that the Neolithic culture of Kashmir has

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106. Ibid; See also J. P. Joshi and Madhu Bala, "Manda: A Harappan site in Jammu and Kashmir" in G. L. Possehl, (ed), *Harappan civilization: A Contemporary Perspective*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 52-54.
107. F. Hole and Flannery, 1962, op. cit., pp. 190-191.
108. Mongait, op. cit., pp. 97, 103, 104, 116,122.
109. Chang, op. cit., pp. 48, 81; Groote, op. cit., p. 66; P. Sing, op. cit., pp. 100-150.
110. S. P. Gupta, op. cit., p. 89.
111. Ibid.
112. Loewe and Shaughnessy (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 1999, pp. 160, 162, 166, 167, 170, 184, 189, 192, 196, 219-20, 225, 479, 727, 916, 918, 927.

close affinity with the Neolithic cultures of what today is called North-West Frontier of Indian subcontinent, presently forming part of Pakistan. This culture emigrated in the valley mainly through the medium of immigrations, settlements and commercial contacts. We know that the Neolithic culture is essentially a diffusion stimuli culture because there is no evidence of evolutionary growth of culture in Kashmir, passing through all stages as no Mesolithic trait has been so far encountered in Kashmir. This has led the archaeologists believe that perhaps around 18000BC there occurred some severe climatic change in Kashmir driving out the population from the valley. And it was around 2920 BC that the process of fresh human settlement began in Kashmir and the people who settled in the valley belonged to Neolithic culture. The people who emigrated and settled in the valley during this long phase of about 1400 years came mainly from northern and western border lands of Kashmir. This is also substantiated by the language and belief of Kashmir. The Kashmiri language, according to the renowned linguist George Grierson belongs to the Dardic group of languages[113]. Dardic group of languages are those languages which are spoken by the people living in the immediate northern and north western border lands of Kashmir from Gilgit to Swat. The earliest belief of Kashmir namely Naga Cult was also in vogue in Khutan, Tibet, Chilas and the northwest including Punjab[114]. That the earliest settlers of Kashmir came from north and northwest is also evidenced from the physiognomy of the majority of Kashmiris which has close resemblance with the people living in the border lands of Kashmir from Gilgit to Punjab. Interestingly the dominant *kram* of Kashmiris provides an additional

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113. George Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. VIII, part I.
114. Buddha Prakash, *Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab*, Op. cit., pp. 47-48.

evidence to substantiate our argument. The majority of the people of Kashmir carry the surname *Bhat* which in Dardistan means king. Not surprisingly therefore that during the earliest times all those who aspired to claim a respectable position in the society adopted the surname *Bhat*-the surname of the earliest and dominant population of Kashmir.

## CHAPTER - III

# The Megalithic Period (1500-700 B.C): The Coming of New People and Culture Change

We have seen that during the Neolithic period, there was continuous influx of people into the Valley. These people came from the immediate borderlands, particularly from those situated on its northern and southern borderlands. However, the comparative archaeology and linguistic evidence shows that the people who lived on the borders of Kashmir had themselves come from other lands, mainly from Central Asia, Iran and China and their culture was constantly fertilized by the influences that radiated from these lands. The immigrations into and cultural contacts with the neighboring territories not only continued after the Neolithic period, but these were so massive that we find remarkable changes in the existing culture.

The important additions that we find are Megaliths, cist graves, rice and millet cultivation, iron and rubble structures.

### *Megaliths*

An important development that we come across 1000 B.C was the erection of huge stones (megaliths). The remains of these megaliths have been found at more than a dozen places namely, Burzahom, Gufkral, Hariparigam, Begund, Brah, Waztal, Tarakpur, Sombur, Pampur, Dadasara and many other places[115]. The megaliths of Kashmir are represented by Menhir type of large stones. These are natural stones, roughly shaped and generally tapering towards the top. They are of

[115]. Shali, op. cit., pp. 90-94

varying sizes. The longest one at Gufkral is 6.55mts long, and shortest so far found is 2.90mts[116](pl.7, fig.26, 27). Mostly these upright stones are found in groups, forming a semi-circle, and as such fall under the alignment type of Megaliths. Only in exceptional cases these Megaliths are located alone. Some of these carry cup marks also.

The archaeologists have not been able to solve the riddle about the exact nature of the Megaliths. They are not tomb stones because they are not associated with skeletal remains as is otherwise the case with most of the menhirs found in many parts of the world. It is sometimes surmised that these huge structures indicate some strong religious belief of the people because the transportation and installation of these mega stones demanded such an exacting labour that only some faith-inspired-force could prompt one to undertake it.

In the immediate neighbourhood megaliths have been found in Chitral and Yasin[117]. It is most probable that there was a big wave of immigration of people from these borderlands of Kashmir; and they occupied not only the old habitations namely Burzahom and Gufkral but also settled down at other places which were virgin until then. Yet it is significant to note that the Megalithic culture of Chitral and Yasin had probably its origin in Mediterranean where from it spread to Caucasus and from Caucasus to Central Asia and then in the Hindukush and Karakoram as was the case with trunnion axes[118]. Significantly enough, the megalithic pattern of Kashmir points to western affiliation. For example, like European menhirs the megaliths of Kashmir form a semi-circle and fall under the alignment type of megaliths. Also, as in

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[116]. Ibid.
[117]. Dani, *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan*, pp. 104-05.
[118]. Ibid.

Kashmir, some of the menhirs in the plains of Salisbury (South England) also bear cup marks[119].

***Cist Graves***

Apart from the Megaliths, some cist graves have been reported from a high plateau on the left bank of river Lidder near Pahalgam[120]. These graves are like box chambers with orthostats on the four sides surmounted by cap stones. The grave goods included pottery, copper rings and wire, shell and some such objects. In one of the smaller pots a tooth and some isolated bones probably of a human being were also reported[121].

The nearest parallel of the cist graves of Kashmir are found in Swat and in many neighbouring Valleys- Dir, Chitral etc; collectively called "Gandhara Grave Culture''[122]. The presence of menhirs and cist graves shows that two culture groups came to Kashmir during the period – one belonging to menhir culture and the other to the cist grave culture.

***Rice***

Paleo-botanical researches have shown that between 1000 B.C and 700 B.C a very important crop namely rice was introduced in Kashmir as remains of this crop have been found at megalithic Gufkral[123]. As the per unit productivity of rice is far greater than rain fed crops- wheat, barley, lentil etc – cultivated so far in Kashmir and that Kashmir was conducive for the cultivation of wet rice, rice cultivation

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[119]. Shali, op. cit., p.91

[120]. Asha Hanley, " Kists in Kashmir,'' in *Times of India Magazine*, December 2,1979.

[121]. Ibid.

[122]. C. Silvi Antonini and G. Stacul, *The Prehistoric Graveyards of Swat*, 2 Vols. Rome, 1972; A. H. Dani et al, "Timargarha and the Gandhara Grave Culture", *Ancient Pakistan*, No. 3, 1967.

[123]. Farooq, A, Lone, op.cit., p. 108.

gradually became the staple crop as well as staple food of Kashmir. It also impacted on the settlement pattern: the people started shifting to those patches of Valley floor which became habitable because only the Valley floor was fit for cultivating rice. We have already seen that hitherto the people lived only on *wuders*.

Until recently it was regarded that India diffused rice cultivation into different parts of South East Asia, Thailand, Vietnam and China. However, the recent researches have shown that while in India the oldest records of cultivated rice are from Mahagara and Koldi (UP) dated B.C 7000- 6000[124], in China the domesticated rice has been dated to 10,000 years ago (i.e. 8000 B.C).[125]

The nearest source which transferred rice cultivation is Swat where its presence is not latter than mid 3rd millennium B.C.[126] Swat itself borrowed the rice culture from China with which it had trade and other contacts[127].

### *Millet*

Another crop that saw introduction side by side with rice was millet. Millet cultivation originated in China[128]. In North China the earliest cultivated millet discovered in the world have been unearthed at

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124. G. R. Sharma and D. Mandal, Excavations at Mahagara 1977-78 (A Neolithic settlement in the Belan valley), *Archaeology of the vindhyas and the Ganga valley*, 6. Allahabad.

125. Richard S. MacNeish and Jane Libby (eds.), Preliminary Report of the Sino-American Jiangxi Origin of Rice Agriculture Project (draft copy), publication in *Anthropology*, No. 13, University of Taxes at E. J. Paso, 1995, Vide. The Cambridge History of Ancient China, 1999. P. 46.

126. Constantini, L, *Vegetal Remains in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Swat*, Rome, 1987, PP. 155-165.

127. Allchin and Allchin., op. cit., P.116.

128. Chang, The Archaeology of Ancient China, PP. 87-95.

a number of sites classified as Cishan or Peilgang culture dated to 10,000 years ago[129]. Peilgang in China means millet. Interestingly enough, the Kashmiri word for millet is *penge*. It is undoubtedly a derivative of Peilgang. The technology of millet cultivation did not come to Kashmir directly from China; it came via Swat where its presence is earlier to Kashmir[130].

With the introduction of rice and millet Kashmir experienced the second agricultural revolution.

## METALLURGY

### *Copper*

Copper started pouring in the Valley from about B.C 2000 as we see some copper objects at the later phase of Neolithic Gufkral[131]. The first ever copper-bronze culture evolved at Sumer in B.C 3500[132]. In the Indus Valley the metal was common around B.C 3000[133]. In Iran Bronze age was established around B.C 2500[134] and in China around 1500 B.C[135]. Thus by the time copper was found in Kashmir, copper and bronze tools were already manufactured in its neighbourhood. It is quite probable that copper was introduced into Kashmir from Swat and Gilgat[136]. It may be mentioned that "comparatively high number of copper weapons" were found in proto-historic Swat[137]; and a large horde

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129. The Cambridge History of Ancient China, Op. cit., P. 45.
130. Allchin and Allchin., Op. cit., P.117.
131. IAR-, 1981,82.;
132. Holt, Rinehatr and Winston, The Science of Man (An Introduction to Anthropology), p. 135.
133. Ibid, P. 314.
134. Hans E. Wulff, Traditional crafts of Persia, P. 4.
135. The Science of Man, op. cit., P.316.
136. Allchin and Allchin, op. cit., P. 116.
137. Antoni and Stacul, op. cit.

of bronze objects including specimens of trunnion axes were discovered at a spot in the Gilgat Karakoram[138].

***Iron***

The most important introduction with far-reaching consequences was the knowledge and use of iron technology. Gufkral excavations revealed a good number of iron objects in the form of points and rods[139]. A fine cobbler's awl was also recovered[140]. That at the megalithic level stone and bone tools considerably reduced in number is a pointer to the substitution of stone and bone tools by iron tools with the ultimate effect of bringing a revolutionary development in the productive sector followed by series of other changes.

The earliest evidence of use of iron comes from North Syria and Iraq around 3rd millennium B.C[141]. However, 'Iron Age' in its true sense began around 1300 B.C[142]. In India iron working started as early as 1000 B.C[143]. and became more common around 800 B.C[144]. Iron objects appear in Gandhara graves datable to first millennium B.C[145]. It is around the same period that we find iron in Kashmir. The emergence of iron working in Gandhara is very significant in context of Kashmir. It is because Kashmir politically as well as culturally was a part of

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138. Karl Jettmar, " Bronze Axes from the Karakoram: Results of the 1958 Expedition in Azad Kashmir," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 105 i, 1961, PP. 98-104.
139. A. K. Sharma, Excavations at Gufkral—1981, *Puravattva* NoII, 1978-80, ed. K. N. Dikshit, 1982.
140. Ibid.
141. N. R. Banerjee, Iron Age in India, p. 106.
142. Allchin and Allchin., Op. cit., p. 309.
143. N. R. Banerjee, Op. cit.,
144. Ibid.
145. Allchin and Allchin., Op. cit., pp. 311-12.

Gandhara. And therefore it seems irresistible to conclude that iron technology entered Kashmir through Gandhara.

***Stone Walled Houses***

The Megalithic period saw a transition from mud or mud brick wall construction to stone walled houses at ground level. The remains of a rubble wall have been found at Burzahom. This innovation occurred in Swat much earlier i.e. around 1700 B.C.[146] and is attributed to the new influences on account of Aryan immigrations[147]. The use of stone subsequently gave birth to stone architecture.

## Continuation of the old

While some major changes took place in different spheres of Kashmir history during the long period of 800 years, broadly called by archaeologists Megalithic Kashmir, many traits of past culture still continued. The people still lived in *wadurs* as is shown by Burzahom and Gufkral settlements, though a process of shifting to valley floor started as is indicated by the presence of Megaliths in the low lying areas too. The mud and brick walled houses persisted in the company of newly introduced stone walled houses. The stone and bone tools were still manufactured albeit their number considerably decreased. However, we notice a development in this regard namely bone tools are marked by handles made mostly from the tibia of a sheep or goat. The traditional crops continued along with the newly introduced rice and millet. Sheep, goat, pig and dog stayed as the favorite domesticated animals, though foul is seen as a new introduction. The wheel made gritty red ware that we find during the latter Neolithic period peripheral to the pottery

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[146]. Stacul, "Swat, Pirak and connected Problems (Mid-2nd Millennium B.C.)" in *South Asian Archaeology*, 1989, p. 268.

[147]. Ibid, p. 49.

assemblage became wide spread during the period. Storage pots with bulbous bodies (pl. 9, fig. 30), rimless jars, bowls, long necked jars and globular jars were main pottery shapes. Both human and animal burials continued though painting of bones with red ochre discontinued .

## Evidence of Aryan Immigration

Unfortunately the evidence on Aryan immigration into Kashmir is extremely slender when compared with Swat, the well known intermediary of cultural diffusion into Kashmir. There are just a few shreds of evidence obtained from the megalithic level of Burzahom and Gufkral, and from the Pre-northern Black Polished Ware level of another important archaeological site ─ Semthan, which perhaps point to the Aryan immigration into Kashmir around 1500 B.C. During the megalithic period we have seen introduction of rice, millet and stone walled houses. Such developments ─ multi cropping system, stone walled houses, rectangular stone sickles as well as the massive spread of burnished ware in Swat around 1700 B.C have been explained in the context of wide ranging cultural exchanges including immigrations particularly of Indo-Aryans. The same may hold true of Kashmir as well though the presence of horse and gray burnished ware is yet to be sufficiently established. Given the intimate relations between Swat and Kashmir and the established fact that any development in Swat quickly transmitted to Kashmir the lack of sufficient evidence regarding horses and grey ware is simply because of want of adequate archaeological explorations in Kashmir.

Though during the Megalithic phase wheel made gritty red ware was dominant which probably can be explained in terms of Kot Dajian influence, the period I of Semthan has revealed grey ware along with

sturdy red, fine red and ochrous red wares. Archaeologists call it Pre-Northern Black Polished Ware i.e., the ware which is encountered in India during the Aryan phase. The pottery forms found at this level also bear generic relationship with the late phase of the post Harappan pottery of Banawali and Bara phase of the plains of Punjab and Haryana.

Recently a site has been spotted situated on the highest terrace of village Hutmur overlooking the river Lidder. An exciting discovery was of plain grey ware under the remains of a later structure. The plain grey ware, as we know, is anterior to painted grey ware.

## CHAPTER - IV

# Harwan and other Kushan Sites: Revealing a Mosaic of Cultures

The most important archaeological site which depicts the Kashmiri culture as a mini global culture is Harwan situated three kilometers beyond Shalimar garden on a dramatic hill side. In the *Rajtarangni* of Kalhana Harwan is referred to *Shadarhadwan* (grove of six saints)[148]. Kalhana says that Nagarjuna famous Buddhist philosopher lived here in the reign of Kanishka[149]. Harwan's significance was unknown until 1895 when a part of its decorated brick pavement was unearthed accidently while constructing the Srinagar water works. These tiles were occasionally washed down from the hill slopes by heavy rains. These chance discoveries did not attract much attention till Hiranand Shastri identified the exact location of the Buddhist site in the forest of Harwan in the year 1919. The brick tiles stamped with images continued to be discovered above the hill side and R. C. Kak illustered several in his 1923 catalogue of the Sri Pratap Sing museum. Realizing the importance of the site R. C. Kak took up excavations in the year 1920-21 and in subsequent years, briefly noting his discoveries in the illustrated London News and more fully in his book *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* Published in 1933 from London.[150] The site is dated variously between the second and seventh century A.D.

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148. *Rajatarangini*, I, 173.
149. Ibid.
150. Kak, R.C., *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, pp. 105-111.

Topographically the structures at Harwan are situated on different terraces cut into a steep hill side of Zabarwan Hill. There was a central flight of steps which connected them and gave access from one to the other. The entire site is divided into three terraces containing about ten ruins located upon each terrace. On the top most terrace the excavations revealed the remains of an apsidal temple and the unique courtyard of remarkable terracotta tiles surrounded on three sides by a low wall of numbered plaques each portraying identical images of an emaciated ascetic figure (pl. 10, fig.32).

Remarkable in its variety, the subject matter of the tiles may be divided into four main categories: humans, animals, flora and abstract designs. Among the human representations are found both male and female figures engaged in many different activities. Some dance as they play a drum (pl. 16, fig. 45) and others are seen carrying water pots (pl. 14, fig, 38). A graceful lady on one tile walks with a basket while on another a male stands guard (pl. 16, fig. 44), holding a long spear in his left hand. Elsewhere a hunter shoots an arrow while riding an animal (pl. 17), while on another, a male figure, wielding a mace-like weapon and striding over a spoked wheel, appears to be in combat with a feline, griffin-like creature which stands on its hind legs (pl. 19, fig. 56), similar to an early relief from Sanchi's Stupa number two. There are several variations on the theme of figures conversing behind a railing or balcony (pl. 13&14). On some, only the heads are shown and one of the figures holds the stalk of a flower. On others, the bust of the figure is represented, and most groups (usually four) appear to be in animated conversation. Quite a few of the tiles illustrate the continuous pattern made by figures supporting a large garland or vine, with the rest of the space being occupied by various flowers and vases with flowers.

The animals, both real and mythical, are presented in a fairly wide variety. Among the more naturalistic representations are the galloping horse (pl. 17), the long-horned stag (pl. 19, fig. 55), the familiar and inevitable elephant walking through what appears to be a lotus garden, and a cow suckling her calf. The horned stags are usually seen standing with their heads turned back as if looking at the large, crescent- shaped object in the corner of the tile (pl. 19, fig. 58). Among birds, the goose or gander and the rooster seem to have especially caught the fancy of the Harwan artist. Roosters appear in several forms: inside roundels with elaborate foliate tails, a more elaborate version with outstretched wings (more like a phoenix), and as a pair, perhaps fighting or playing with what seems to be a flower bud between them (pl. 13, fig. 37). There is also a *makara* type of fanciful or mythical animal with a serpent like body and curling tail, a large head with the tongue protruding from an open mouth and a nose that curves upwards somewhat like an elephant's trunk. Various flowers surround the beast and a symbol of two interlocking circles is placed above and slightly behind the creature (pl. 14, fig. 41).

The floral designs consist of variations of lotus plants and aquatic leaves that not only fill individual tiles but also serve as border motifs, either as continuous patterns or as individual plants or stylized petals. Round pots with small necks and sprouting flowers appear frequently, and individual circular patterns, made up of petals and leaves as well as a stylized version of the well known fleur-de-lis, are represented. There is at least one instance of a floral scroll consisting of a vine and bunches of grapes. Floral motifs used as border designs include roundels and dots, geometric repeat patterns, rosettes and simple hatching (pl. 18).

The existence of Kharoshti numerals on the tiles affords a reliable clue to the date of the tiles. Kharoshti script ceased to be in vogue in north-western India, where it had principally flourished, about the fifth century A.D. It follows, therefore, that the tiles belong to a period anterior to that century, possibly a considerable period. The fact that the Kharoshti numerals at Harwan were intended for the guidance of common labourers indicates that the script must have been at the highest pitch of popularity at the time the tiles were made. On the basis of this Kak accordingly placed the date of the tiles and consequently that of the diaper pebble masonry with which they are associated at about A.D 300[151].

The structural remains of the middle terrace have almost disappeared due to frequent cloud burst and excessive rains except for the terraces of rubble and diaper pebble structures. In the lowest terrace four structures were noticed by the excavators these were built in diaper rubble, diaper pebble and in a peculiar style which was evidently a cross between the older pebble style and the later rubble style.[152] Among the buildings constructed in diaper rubble style are (1) triple base of a medium sized Stupa (pl. 11, fig. 33) (2) a set of rooms which might have served as chapels or for residential purposes.[153] While digging under its foundations a copper coin of *Toramana* who flourished in the late 5th century A.D., was discovered.[154] From this piece of evidence it could be inferred that the Stupa could possibly be not earlier then the late 5th century though it might be considerably later in date. From the fragmentary and haphazard figured tile pavement found around the

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151. Ibid, p. 10.
152. Ibid, p.
153. Ibid.
154. Kak, R.C., *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of S.P.S. Museum.*

Stupa Kak rightly infers that these tiles were transplanted from a different and earlier structures.[155]

Among the antiquities that this area yielded, were a large number of broken fingers and toes of terracotta figures, terracotta curls belonging to images of the Buddha (pl. 25 & 26), of which no other remnant was found, and a few clay votive tablets bearing in relief miniature stupas (pl. 12, fig. 36). These last are extremely interesting, in as much as they give an idea of the kind of stupas that were built in Kashmir in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Stupa depicted on the tablets had a triple base, all the three flights of steps leading up being in line with one another, as is the case with the existing Stupa at Harwan. From the uppermost basement sprang a cylindrical dome with a bulging hemispherical top, which was surmounted by a number of umbrellas, standing one over the other, and diminishing in size until they end in a pointed finial. They are supported by what appears to be a forest of poles radiating out wards. To the finial were attached several long waving streamers. On one side of the Stupa, standing in the courtyard or it may be on the first terrace of the plinth, was a "lion" column. Below the representation of the Stupa on the plaque, the Buddhist creed, *Ye dharma*, etc., in Brahmi characters of about 4th century A.D., is stamped in relief.

## Plural sources of Harwan site

It has been generally believed that the structures found at the upper and the lower terraces were constructed between 2nd and 6th century AD. This was the period of Kushans, Kidarates and Huns who successively occupied Kashmir after dislodging the Huns from power.

155. Op. cit., pp. 105-111.

In fact right from about 200 BC Kashmir was under the occupation of Central Asian powers namely Bactrian Greeks, Shakas, Parthians, Kushans, Kidarates and Huns. The culture of all these central Asian powers was essentially syncretic in nature derived as it was from Greek, Iranian, Indian, Central Asian and Chinese civilizations. It is therefore no wonder to see Harwan a representative of many world civilizations. This fact struck the renowned historian of architecture, Percy Brown who found Harwan representing "motifs suggestive of more than half a dozen alien civilizations of the ancient world besides others which are indigenous and local[156]". In order to appreciate the plural sources of the Harwan site or the civilization which flourished during the centuries, a comparative account of the features of the Harwan site is given below:

1. The overall plan of Harwan (pl. 33) closely takes after the fire temple at Surkhkotal (pl. 35) (Bactria) dedicated by Kanishka. Like Harwan the Surkhkotal temple is a terraced structure with a courtyard surrounding the main temple located upon the highest level.[157] Both Harwan and Surkhkotal originally had a stairway leading through the centre of each terrace.
2. The apsidal temple preceded by an oblong hall has resemblance with the temple of Artemis-Nanaia at Dura-Europus (a famous Parthian site) and also with the apsidal structure of Sircap, the Greeko-Parthain city. It is no wonder if we consider that Kushan culture was predominantly a synthesis of Greeco-Parthian culture[158].
3. The facial characteristics of the human figures stamped on the tiles bear close resemblance with the inhabitants of the regions

[156]. Brown, Percy, *Indian Architecture, Hindu and Buddhist,* p. 155.
[157]. Shazia Shafiq, *A Study of Kushan Rule in Kashmir,* (unpublished Ph. D thesis), pp. 3-4.
[158]. Ibid.

roundabout of Yarkand and Kashgar whose heavy features prominent cheek bones, narrow sunk and slanting eyes and receding foreheads are faithfully represented on the tiles. Needless to say the Kushans originally belonged to this area[159].

4. The different masonry styles namely the rubble stone style, pebble style, diaper pebble style and the diaper rubble style have their origins in Greek, Shaka, Parthian and Kushan cultures[160]. It should be mentioned that coarse rubble masonry was the characteristic of Greek and Shaka periods, and the heavy diaper heavy masonry was the trait of the Parthian and Kushan periods. At Taxila heavy diaper masonry was introduced at Sircap by the Parthians because in comparison to rough rubble masonry it was earth quake resistant. With the coming of the Kushans the diaper masonry was acquisitively augmented and widely introduced in other parts of the empire. Different stupas and monasteries at Taxila of this period were of the same characteristic[161].

5. The human figures stamped on the tiles present a best representation of the synthesis of the Greek and Parthian art (pl. 15). The Greek art taught freedom to the east as in this art figures are shown in every attitude; face view, side view, back view and in every kind of intermediate posture[162]. The main features of the Parthian art are "the frontality" the neglect of body in contrast to Greek art, linearity of contour, painstaking depiction of details of dress, ornament, furniture and ethnic characteristics (oriental "verismus"), spirituality and finally the scenes of hunt, combat or

159. Ibid.

160. Marshall, Sir John, *Taxila,* Vol. I, p. 218.

161. Ibid, p. 63.

162. Daniel Schlumberger, "*Parthian Art"* in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Iran,* Vol. 3(2), p.1051.

chase and portrayal of figures on horses at a flying gallop[163]. The Harwan figures possess all the salient features of Greek art. They are shown in almost all attitudes and postures, and generally the whole body is depicted. However, it does not possess the central feature of the Partian art viz, the 'frontality' where the figures are portrayed full face and in frontal representation. It should be mentioned that a striking feature of the human figures on the Harwan tiles, is that the head is invariably shown in profile and the body facing front. The profile is same as is noticed in the Greek coins of other Central Asian rulers including Kushans. Although 'frontality' is missing, the other important features of the Parthian art are significantly noticeable. There is wonderful painstaking depicton of dress, ornaments, ethnic characteristics, scenes of hunt, combat, chase and portrayal of figures on horseback at a flying gallop. What is more, these tiles portray Parthian mode of dress, with leggings and long skirts, diaphanous garments and prominent ear rings. It is in place to mention that by the end of first century A.D the Parthian art had inter alia spread up to China and India.

6. The site is a typical example of the syncretic religious system prevalent under Bactrian Greeks, Shakas, Parthians, Kushans, Kadirites and Huns. Under the influence of Zoroastrianism the mountain on the slope of which the structures were constructed was called Har after the sacred mountain of Zoroastrians. Probably like the Surkhkotal temple the Harwan temple was also dedicated to this Zoroastrian deity. That all the Central Asian powers who occupied Kashmir had a deeply embedded reverence for Zoroastrianism is a fact which needs no elaboration. Many tiles contain the Buddhist

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163. M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art" in *Yale Classical Studies* (1935), pp. 155-304.

emblem *dharmachakra* (wheel of law) showing an equal regard for Buddhism. The exceptionally high honor shown to ascetics as evident by their placement and reputation shows the distinguished place asceticism commanded on account of the appropriation of Gnostic movements and ideas prevalent in Greek Parthian and Indian cultures.

7. Harwan tiles are no doubt unusual but not unique, decorative floor tiles with floral designed have been found in Turfan and China[164]. Korea offers richer examples[165]. From Khalachayen in Uzbekistan have come fired tiles from walls illustrating classical figures and representations of people.[166] Another site near Bukhara has revealed number of decorative stuccos with geometric and vegetation ornament and procession of animals and birds. At least one Buddhist monument from Gandhara once contained a court yard of tiles but without pictorial decoration[167]. Glass tiles were used for the construction of processional path at *Bamla* and in swat[168].

8. The first clear evidence of the impact of Shaka Parthian military technology on Kashmir comes from Harwan tiles. It is well known that the Parthians were unrivaled as mounted archers who were able to shoot while riding at full speed. Also they pretended to flee and suddenly turned around and aimed their deadly arrows at their pursuers. This is proverbial "Parthian shot." The Harwan tiles show a horse fully accounted and horse men in armour riding at full gallop and drawing his bow. On the right attached saddle hangs his

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[164]. A. Von Le Coq, *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan* (London, 1982, p. 61).
[165]. 5000 years of *Korean Art* (San Francisco, 1979), fig. 65, 66.
[166]. A. Belenitsky, *Central Asia* (Cleveland and Newyork) p. 100.
[167]. John, Marshall, *Taxila* Cambridge, 1951, Vol. I, p. 374
[168]. Ibid, p.375.

quiver. The horse man represented on the tiles bear a Central Asian physiognomy and also wear a Central Asian dress. Amorous scenes, while drinking, dancing and musical representations on some tiles can be understood in the context of the influence of Hellenistic culture on Parthians and Kushans in northwest India where the *bacchanalian* scenes formed the favourite themes for the decoration of the Buddhist stupas.[169]

9. It is acknowledged on all hands that the Central Asian contacts brought about profound changes in Kashmir's costumes, coiffures, cosmetics, food, drinks, ornaments, amusements and recreations. Harwan tiles provide at least a glimpse of it. It is important to know that the Harwan tiles depict only one type of male upper garment. It is triangle collared and full sleeved long tunic extending slightly beneath the knees with pointed ends. In the ancient Indian literature it is called *kanacuka*.[170] Perhaps it was basically a Parthian dress. A long *kanchuk* like dress was also in use in Dura Europus in the first century A.D.[171] Indeed before becoming popular in India itself the fashion had lived in north western India for some time as exactly similar court patterns are met with at Gandhara in the second and 3rd century of the Christian era.[172] Trousers were introduced in India by the Scythians and Parthians.[173] As expected they first came into vogue in Gandhara.[174] The two types of trousers were most common one was tight fitting all along its full length and the other was baggy in the middle and

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169. Puri B. N., "The Sakas and Indo-Parthians in *History of Civilizations in Central Asia,* Vol II, p. 205.
170. Thapliyal, U. P., *Foreign Elements in Ancient Indian Society,* p. 43.
171. Grisham, R, *Iran*: *Parthians and Sassanians*, pp. LIX.
172. Thapliyal, U.P., op. cit., p. 60.
173. Marshall, Sir John., op. cit., p. 443.
174. Ibid.

tight in the hem.[175] In Kashmir we mainly come across the former type — tight fitting full length trousers. The most typical Scythian, Parthian and Kushan head dress was a conical cap known as *kulah* in Sanskrit, Persian and Hindi. In one of the Harwan tiles we find the mounted hunter wearing a conical cap with flaps coming down over the ears. The fashion of wearing fillet (Sanskrit *patikam*; Kashmiri *patka*) around the head was basically a Persian dress[176] influencing equally the Parthians, Scythians and Kushans. In the Harwan tiles we find a mounted warrior wearing fillet. There is an often repeated portrait of a couple belonging to ruling class. Although the male is curly haired with a coiffure which looks like a net designed wig, a little portion of his forehead is occasionally shaven. Significantly the custom of shaving the front part of the head obtain both among the Greeks and Scythians.[177] In an exceptionally treated plaque portraying a couple belonging to upper class shows the male head completely shaven off as bald as the coot. This practice obtained among the *tukharians.*[178] The common ornaments portrayed on Harwan tiles are the prominently big and round ear rings worn by men and women and the locket like ornament worn by women alone. The ear rings are ascribed to Iranian influences and the locket like ornament was well known in the Greek world influencing the Scythians, Parthians and the Kushans.[179] The Central Asians were great lovers of music, dance and drama.[180] Even as far as in Ajanta musicians are dressed in

175. Mani, B.R., *The Kushan civilization,* pp. 76-78.
176. Rawlinson, G, *Five Great Monarchies of Ancient East,* pp. 155, 160, 162.
177. Mani, B.R., *The Kushan Civilization.,* pp. 78.
178. Ibid.
179. Thapliyal, op. cit., p. 74.
180. Ibid, p. 90.

Scythio-Kuhsana style.[181] It is therefore understandable that music and dance forms one of the important themes of the figurative tiles of Harwan. In one of the registers of a tile is a representation of orchestra consisting of three musicians playing flute, cymbals and a pair of drums. Another type shows a standing female musician playing a double sided drum (pl. 17, fig. 47). Another tile makes a representation of a female dancer completely absorbed in dancing.

To be sure, Harwan is a most precious site for situating Kashmir history in the context of global history. Although a very slender material evidence of the site has survived to us and, even if the evidence still awaits for a scholarly steady, the little known information provides a fascinating information of the plural sources of Kashmiri culture. Percy Brown highlights this distinctive importance of this site in the following words:

*"Harwan tiles are suggestive of more than half a dozen alien civilizations of the ancient world besides other which are indigenous and local such are Bahrut railings, the Greek swain, the Sassain foliated fret, the Indian elephant the Ashrian lion with figures of dancers musicians cavaliers and ascetic and racial types drawn from many sources as may be seen by their costumes and accessories."*[182]

## Other Kushan sites

Many Kushan sites have been found at different places of the valley which without any doubt belong to Kushan period and throw significant information on the spread of Buddhism and Central Asian influences in Kashmir though these sites still await a proper scientific

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181. Ibid, p. 153.
182. Brown, Percy, op. cit., p. 155.

excavation. Of these sites mention is made of Doenpather, Hoinar, Hutmur, Takyabala, Ahan, Kralchak, Kotbal (pl. 20), Ushkur, Kanispur and Gurwet. *Doenpather* near *Pahalgam* is another important site throwing light on the art of tile making in Kashmir.[183] The another significant find is a red ware pot with globular body and long neck having splayed out rim (pl. 24, fig. 76). It is a Parthian pot.[184] Its variants were found by Marshall at Taxila. Hoinar is also near Pahalgam. Here the remains of three dome shaped stupas have been encountered. Another important find of the site is stamped tiles, of course inferior to Harwan. The motifs stamped on the tiles show it a Kushan site with no ambiguity. The significant motifs are chakra-the symbolic representation of Buddhist religion, two human beings in their Kushan dress, expressing joy over successfully targeting the running deer (pl. 23, fig 72). Another important motif is the two strange winged animals standing on their two hind legs and having abnormally long necks interlocked twice to form a loop (pl. 23, fig. 70). The animals face each other as if in a fight. This motif has parallels in Iran at Qateh-i-Yazdigirid,[185] a Parthian site (pl. 23, fig. 71). It is reminiscent of ancient Mesopotamian tradition. Such motifs are reported to have come from Nuristan in Afghanistan as well[186]; and have been often encountered in Scythian burials.[187] In the same range falls the other exciting site of Hutmur. The important finds of the place are the decorated tile pavements far superior to the above mentioned sites, the tiles are numbered in Kharoshti the centre of the pavement has a three

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[183]. Ajaz, A, Banday, " The Plastic Art of Kashmir*",* in *The Journal of Central Asian Studies,* The University of Kashmir Srinagar, 2004-2005, pp. 65-66.

[184]. Ibid.

[185]. Bhan, "Iconographic Interactions between Kashmir and Central Asia" in *Central Asia and Kashmir Cultural Contacts and Interactions,* ed. B.K, Koul, Dembi, p. 77.

[186]. Ibid.

[187]. Ibid.

dimensional *kamalaghata* (pl. 34, fig. 121). The second row of tiles has *kalpavrksa* emerging out of a *puranaghata* (pl. 21). The tiles of the remaining rows contain the motifs of swains, cocks, stag, lion and geometrical lion design. The most exciting tile has three separate compartments. In the left is shown a man with a broad smiling face, hairs twisted in a projected knot at the back and wearing a typical Kushan dress. His right hand rests on the right hip, holds some object of amusement as his eyes are curiously fixed towards it. The central figure is in a dancing pose with a pointed raised tail. The third figure is an animal headed human in an action pose facing towards the dancing figure (pl. 22, fig. 67). There are also indications of a Stupa. The entire complex is demarcated with a pebble wall which in turn is enclosed by a rubble wall. Ahan near Sumbul has revealed a terracotta tile with a figure which satisfies all the hallmarks of Kushana dress. It represents a human figure holding like the Kushan kings a long spear in the left hand, foot splayed out ward in heavy soft riding boots and his top long court flays to the knees and is tight at the waist (pl. 34, fig. 123). Ushkur near Baramula is Hushkapora of Kalhana. The ruins of the site portray it an important Buddhist site which is also supported by Hsuan Tsang who stayed in the monastery of Hushkpora for the night.[188] The terracotta heads (pl. 27 & 28) found at the site are represented by Buddha, Bodhisatvas and monks. Most of these heads have stronger resemblance with those of Taxila terracotta's.[189] Kanispur is *Kanishkpura* of Kalhana built by Kanishka near *Baramula*. The tiles found at the place resemble

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[188]. Life of Hsuan Tsang, p. 68.

[189]. Kak, R.C. op. cit., p. 152-154.Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* by M. A. Stein, p. 173.

more or less with the *Bamla* Stupa and cell b5 tiles in Taxila.[190] The pottery found at the site is Kushan but degenerated.[191]

190. Ajaz, A. Banday, *Early Terracotta Art of Kashmir,* Srinagar 1992, p. 9.
191. Ibid.

## CHAPTER – V

# Semthan Finds and Their Sources

***Semthan Site:*** Semthan ($75^0$ 9` longitude; $33^0$ 48` latitude) is located on an elevated plateau in district Anantnag near Bijbehara on the Jammu Srinagar national highway. The site comprises six contiguous low and high mounds. At the highest point of the mound the habitational deposit is about 18 meters[192]. A small scale excavation at Semthan was started in 1977 by the erst-while north western circle of the Archaeological Survey of India[193]. Later systematic work was carried out for three sessions from 1981 to 1983 under the direction of R. S. Bisht the then superintending archaeologist.[194] Certainly, in the words of G. S. Gaur, "Semthan excavation is a step towards bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushan periods in Kashmir[195]." The Semthan excavations have given a sequence of cultures starting from the middle of the first millennium B.C up to the late medieval times.[196] Significantly Semthan has provided important evidence about two hitherto unknown cultures in the valley of Kashmir namely the pre NBP and NBPW.[197] About other cultures- Indo-Greek, Kushan and Hun - the site provides additional information. The important finds revealed by Semthan excavations on different successive cultures is given below.

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192. IAR., 1978-79, P.70.
193. IAR., Ibid.
194. IAR., 1980-81, P.21; IAR – 1984-85
195. G.S. Gaur, *Semthan Excavations in Archaeology and History* (Ghosh Memorial), ed. by B. M. Pande, et al., 1`New Delhi, 1987, PP. 37-337.
196. Ibid.
197. Ibid.

## Period 1st – Pre - northern Black Polished Ware (c.700-500 B.C.)

***Houses*:** This period shows regular building activity which is borne out by successive floor levels. However no house plan could be observed. Yet it is probable that the earlier inhabitants of Semthan lived in hutments. This is indicated by post holes and evidence of thatched roof with prominent grass impressions.[198]

***Antiquities*:** The important antiquities include terracotta and bone beads.[199] There is also evidence of the use of copper and iron as several pieces of copper and an iron arrow head and iron slag were also recovered.[200]

***Pottery*:** The significant discovery of the period is the presence of pottery which has been classified into five types of fabrics[201] (1) sturdy red ware of fine paste made carefully on the wheel and treated occasionally with bright red slip, (2) a thin sectioned pottery with deep chocolate slip, (3) dull red ware with incisions making multiple wavy lines, criss-cross patterns, etc., (4) burnished grey ware, (5) handmade crude ware of poor clay tempered with stone grits[202](pl. 8, fig. 28).

The main shapes include a dish cum bowl on stand, deep bowl like lid with the central knob, a dabber based pot probably resembling gobbet, cooking vessels etc.[203]

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198. Ibid.
199. G. M. Buth, R. S. Bisht and G. S. Gaur, " Investigations of Paleobotanical remains from Semthan," in *Man and Environment*, Vol. VI, 1982, pp. 41-45.
200. Ibid.
201. IAR., 1980-81, P. 32
202. Ibid.
203. Ibid.

***Cereals*****:** The remains of various cereals found at the site are rice, wheat, barley, *mong* and lentil[204]. The largest quantity of cereals encountered is wheat followed by barley and rice.[205]

A very important evidence coming from Semthan is the grey ware found in period 1st and 2nd, most of which show affinity with the contemporary grey ware in the swat valley[206] and also some kind of generic relationship with the late phase of the post Harappan pottery of the Banawali – bra phase of the plains in the Punjab and Haryana[207]. It further testifies to the coming of Aryans who began immigrating in Kashmir not later than 1500 BC as shown by the finds obtained from the megalithic period. Especially the multi-cropping system, stone walled houses, rectangular stone sickles which along with horses and burnished grey ware in swat around 1700 BC have been explained in the context of immigrations of indo-Aryans. Recently a site has been spotted on the highest terrace of village Hutmur over looking the river lidder. An exciting discovery was of plain grey ware under the remains of a later structure.[208] The plain grey ware, as we know, is anterior to plain grey ware. A later work, *nilmatapurana*, the canonical work of Kashmiri Brahmans written in 7th or 8th century A.D also records the arrival of Aryans.[209]

## Period 2nd – Northern Black Polished ware

Having an occupational thickness of about 1.35 cm this period is underlined by the following developments:

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204. G. M. Buth, R. S. Bisht and G. S. Gaur, op. cit.
205. Ibid.
206. Allchin and Allchin, op. cit., P. 116.
207. Ibid.
208. Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J and K Government, Art Treasures of Jammu and Kashmir- *A broacher Srinagar*, 1988.
209. *Nilamatapurana*, ed and tr. By Ved Kumari, Vol. I, p. 4.

1. Presence of northern black polished ware in association with red and grey wares. However the grey ware found here is different from that generally found in association with NBPW elsewhere. The common shapes were dishes, bowls, vases, cooking pots and rimless *handis*.[210]
2. Punch marked copper and silver coins.[211]
3. A rubble wall and the use of mud clods even for making of floors.[212]
4. Copper and Iron objects as well as bone points.[213]
5. Terracotta Balls and Beads of semi precious stone and terracotta.[214]
6. Presence of new plants which were absent in period one namely oat, *urad* (fossilus mongo), pea.[215]

The finds obtained from period 2nd especially NBPW and punch marked coins fit in a big gap in the history of Kashmir as prior to this excavation there was no conclusive evidence about the Mauryan occupation of Kashmir. The Ashoka mentioned in the *Rajtarangni* was declared by Kalhana as the local ruler provoking controversies about his real identity.[216] The Semthan finds set at rest the conflicting opinions by clearly demonstrating that Kashmir was a part of Mauryan empire. It is a common place fact that where ever the Mauryans extended the boundaries of their empire, the political domination was accompanied by cultural conquest especially represented by NBPW and punch

210. IAR, 1979-80, P.32.
211. IAR, 1980-81, P. 21.
212. Ibid.
213. IAR, 1979-80, P.32.
214. Ibid.
215. G. M. Buth, R. S. Bisht and G. S. Gaur, *Investigations of Paleobotanical remains from Semthan,* Vol. VI, Pune, 1982, PP. 41-45.
216. *Rajatarangini*, tr. M.A. Stein, Book, I, PP. 101-106.

marked coins found in all parts of the Mauryan Empire.[217] Although Kalhana calls Ashoka as the local ruler his information about the belief of the ruler is faultless as he portrays him a Buddish ruler who constructed many Viharas and stupas[218]. It is significant to note that subsequently in the course of explorations many more NBPW sites namely *Bonugantmula* and *Kanishpur* in Baramulla were spotted showing wide spread distribution of Mauryan culture.[219] Understandably Mauryan impact on Kashmir proved of considerable significance considering the far advanced Mauryan culture underlined by intensive use of iron[220], wide spread rice culture[221], prevalence of writing, plenty of punch marked coins[222], NBPW introduction of burnt bricks[223] and ring wells[224], rise of towns and elaborate administrative system[225]. Significantly it is for the first time that we hear from any source about the foundation of a city. According to Kalhana Srinagri was built by Ashoka.[226] And the chronicler also credits Jaluka the successor of Asoka for having introduced an elaborate system of administration as he credits him for having established eighteen offices instead of seven existing by then.[227] The Mauryan period is also remarkable for the introduction of Buddhism as most of the Buddhist sources attribute the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir to Majjhantika a monk of Varanasi sent to

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217. *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1978-79, p. 70; 1980-81, P. 21; 1981-82, P.16.
218. *Rajatarangini*, op. cit., Book, I, PP. 102-103.
219. *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1978-79, p.70, 1981-82, p.16.
220. R. S. Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, p. 89.
221. Ibid, op. cit., p.96.
222. P. L. Gupta, *Coins*, pp. 8-18.
223. Sharma, op. cit., p.100.
224. Ibid.
225. Kautliya, *Arthashastra*, pp. I, II.
226. *Rajatarangini*, I, P. 104.
227. Ibid, I, P. 120.

Kashmir by Ashoka in accordance with his policy of sending missionaries to different countries to propagate Buddhism.[228]

## Period 3rd - Indo-Greeks to Shaka - Parthians

Period 3rd at Semthan has revealed a deposit of 40 cm consisting of several floor levels.[229] The significant finds, besides the floor levels obtained from this phase are as follows.

1. Indo-Greek coins. Even prior to excavations Semthan had yielded from the surface the coins of Indo-Bactrian rulers.
2. A clay seal depicting an Indo- Greek deity.
3. A pot shred with an inscription consisting of five letters engraved below the rim portion. It reads as Dhamoari or Dharmo.
4. Human heads with serene facial expressions.
5. Terracotta carrying a variety of shapes.
6. A thin sectioned distinct pottery having reddish pink slip. The striking shapes are *thalis* (pans), vases without turned an in ternary thickened rims, vessels with high necks and also goblets.
7. The site has also revealed the coins of Shaka and Parthians who occupied Kashmir after the indo-Greeks.[230]

***Bactrian-Greeks and Kashmir:*** Bactrian Greeks, also called Indo-Greeks, were those Greek soldiers whom the Greek ruler, Selecus stationed in Bactria (near Kabul) under the command of a General to rule the area on behalf of the Central authority.[231] In course of time, however, the Greek rulers of Bactria, like other military

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228. *Mahavamsa*, XII, p. 3; *Dul-Va* (A. Xylograph), XI, pp. 684-90, quoted by S.C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, Calcutta, 1957, p. 158.
229. IAR, 1980-81.
230. Ibid.
231. W.W. Taran, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 30-35, See also A.K. Narain, *The Indo Greeks*.

colonies, carved out an independent kingdom. It happened around 240 B.C under the leadership of Euthydoms. Euythydoms was succeeded by his son Demetrius (200-185 BC). He is remembered for having created a great empire comprising Afghanistan, Eastern Iran, Seistan upto Indus, Jehlum and Kashmir.[232] Demetrius was succeeded by a host of Indo-Greek rulers namely Eucratides, Menandar, Antimachus II, Philoxenus, Appolodotus, Nicias, Hippostriatus and Calliope (also known as Hermaeus).[233]

***Evidence on Kashmir under the Bactrian-Greeks**:* There is a variety of evidence suggesting that Kashmir was a part of the Bactrian-Greek empire. The main evidence comes from Semthan which reveals that after the Mauryas the place was occupied by the Greeks. The important finds obtained from this place are: coins of the Indo-Greek rulers, a clay seal depicting a Greek deity, a pot shred with an inscription in Greek and terracotta figurines in Greek costume.[234] The coins which have been found at Semthan and other places belong to many Greek rulers, namely, Euthydoms, Demetrius, Eucratides, Menandar, Antimachus II, Appolodotus, Hippostriate and Lysias.[235]

There are also passing references in the written sources alluding to the occupation of the Valley by Indo-Greeks. For example, Kalhana refers Jaluka's encounter with the Greeks and his supposed triumph

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232. W.W. Taran, op. cit., p. 155.
233. Ibid.
234. IAR, 1980-81.
235. R.C. Kak, *Handbook of Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of S.P.S. Museum*, p. 58, 125-130.

over them.[236] Also, there is a mention that Jaluka was succeeded by Damodara.[237] Damodara is a Sanskritized version of Demitrius.[238] There are also passing references in Ptolemy's account[239] as well as in *Milindo-panho*[240], which suggest that Menendra was the ruler of Kashmir. Perhaps the potsherd found at Semthan which contains the inscription 'Dharmorai' or 'Dharmo rajai' refers to king Menendar.[241]

The archaeological and literary evidence about the Indo-Greek presence in Kashmir is supplemented by non-conventional sources- place-names, philology and physiognomy. All those places of Kashmir which bear the names ending in –*hom* were once Greek settlements. *Hom* is the Kashmirized form of Greek 'ium'. Referring to a specific category of Greek settlements in Asia Taran says,"… any place bearing a non-dynastic man's name like Docimium, Zenoditium, Menidemium… was once a military colony which had named itself after the official who founded it[242]". There are also many place-names in Kashmir which are essentially Greek names. For example Methan (Gk.Methone)[243], Odus (Gk. Edessa)[244], Sotur

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[236]. *Rajatarangini* - I, op. cit., P.115.
[237]. Ibid, p. 153.
[238]. S.V. Sohini, "The Chavillakara Fragments in Kalhanas Rajatarangini," *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* (JBRS), 1950, pp.7ff. vide Narain, op. cit. p.44.
[239]. Taran, op. cit., p. 238.
[240]. *Milindapanha*, ed, by V. Trenckner, pp. 82-83.
[241]. Aman Ashraf Wani, op. cit., p.147.
[242]. Taran, op. cit, P.11.
[243]. Maitona or Methone is Greek and Macedonian place-name. Taran, op. cit., p. 11.
[244]. Edessa is a Roman name. It was the name of some famous Greek towns. Taran, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

(Gk. Sotoer or Soteria[245]), Athan (Gk. Athena[246]), Charus (Gk. Charis[247]), Medur (Gk. Mudura[248]), Pa ‘rgaum (Gk. Pergamum[249]), Memender (Gk. Menedar[250]), Romuh (Gk. Roma[251]) etc.

**Impact**

***Immigrations and settlements:*** In the continuous process of immigrations and settlements of people drawn from different parts of the neighbouring world, a new element was – Greek element introduced in the mosaic ethnic and cultural composition of Kashmiri population. This further promoted its cosmopolitan character and enriched culture besides increasing its demographic strength and extending the area of cultivation to meet the needs of additional mouths.

***Growth of Trade:*** The Indo-Greek period led to the growth of Kashmir’s external and internal trade on account of two main factors namely the influx of money currency and establishment of Kashmir’s linkages with a wider market. Despite the fact that the Mauryas introduced money currency in Kashmir, the fact remains

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245. In Greek *soter* means ‘the saviour’. It was a covetous title by which Appolodotus and Menender called themselves (Taran, op cit., p. 175). We also come across a Greek city by the name of Soteire in eastern Iran, p. 13.
246. Athena was a Greek goddess.
247. Charis was one of the famous Greek cities in eastern Iran. Taran, op. cit., p. 13.
248. Modoura was a Greek goddess or nymph. Ibid., p. 252.
249. Pergamum was the Greek place-name. Taran, op. cit., p. 179.
250. The Village Memender, situated near Shopian, is a corrupt form of Menender, the famous Greek King.
251. Roma was the Greek goddess.

that it became known at a mass scale from the Indo – Greek period. This is substantiated by the term commonly used in Kashmir for money currency. Money is called dyar in Kashmir. It is a derivative of Greek *dinarus*. Though the Sanskrit sources of Kashmir used the word *dinnara*, the Kashmiri phonology churned it out as *dyar*. It is true that the traditional term *har/ hareh* (cowry) for currency survived side by side, nevertheless *dyar* is definitely a far more value-loaded term than *har/hereh* when put to use.[252]

***Coinage:*** The credit for the introduction of proper coinage goes to the Greeks. The punch marked coins introduced by the Mauryas, did not bear inscriptions nor portraits or names of the rulers. The Greeks were the first to introduce the coins which bear portraits of the rulers, their names and epithets, bilingual inscriptions and figures of deities[253]. The Greek coinage greatly influenced the coins of many succeeding dynasties namely Scythians, Parthians and Kushans who always retained on their coins Greek titles and Greek script of varying qualities[254].

***Town Planning:*** Greeks are known for a special pattern of town planning. They made use of natural factors such as the backing of hills, gullies, ravines, rivers etc for strengthening the defense of the

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[252]. For Kalhanas frequent mention of *Dinara*, See *Rajatarangini,* iii, p. 103; iv, 495, 617, 898; v, 71, 84 sq; 87, 89, 108, 116; vi, 38; vii, 163, 406 sq; 500, 950, 1118, 1220; viii, 124, 151 sq, 883, 3335.

[253]. Gupta, op. cit., PP. 21-22.

[254]. Ibid.

cities[255]. And the Greek city possessed three main features – stone wall, acropolis in the center and projected main gate.[256] Although the spade has yet to discover the remains of any city of the period, the temple complexes of ancient Kashmir perhaps preserve the tradition of Greek town planning, as they too were designed on the pattern of Greek towns – stone wall, religious structures in the center and an imposing main gate.[257] Besides, like the Greeks all the ancient rulers of Kashmir used natural factors for strengthening the defence of their cities.[258]

## Art and Architecture

It is well known that a new art and architecture emerged in Gandhara on account of the fusion of Greek and Buddhist art. This Greeco-Buddhist art is called Gandhara art. Unfortunately no specimen of this art and architecture has come down to us. But the later sculpture and architecture that has survived the ravages of time do show that the art and architecture of Kashmir was considerably influenced by the Gandhara art and architecture[259]. Many architectural features of Kashmiri temples namely, columns of Doric order, pediments and trefoil archs were borrowed from Greek

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[255]. Saifur-Rehman Dar, op. cit., P. 32.

[256]. Ibid.

[257]. Robert E. Fisher, "Stone Temples", in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.) *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir,* pp. 33-35.

[258]. All the cities of Kashmir-Srinagari, Parvarpur, Kaniskapura, Parihaspura, Avantipura, etc – were built keeping in view the presence of these natural factors which helped in strengthening their defense, besides adding to their charm.

[259]. *Art and Architecture of Kashmir*, op. cit.

architecture.[260] It is interesting to mention here that the specimens of Doric art have survived in Kashmir only.[261] The S. shaped brackets, caryatides, pedimental arches, meanders, vine scrolls, laurel leaves, garland bearers, atlantes, tritons and many other motifs were unmistakably of Greek origin.[262] During the period of the Greeks we find in Taxila the art of stone dressing, stone cutting, stone carving and stone polishing achieving a remarkable progress.[263] The same could be true of Kashmir as well.

Greek art taught freedom to the artists of the east as the Greek art figures are shown in every attitude – face view, side view, and even back view and in every kind of intermediate posture.[264]

The motifs stamped on the Harwan tiles, depicting figures in varied attitudes clearly demonstrate the Greek trait of artistic freedom.

Another art form which seems to be a direct influence of Greek art is visible in Kashmiri clay trays.[265] These clay trays just like Gandhara toilet trays[266] carry relief decorations within a circular space.

***Religion**:* Except Menander - The Indo-Greeks professed their ancestral heathenic pantheistic religion.[267] This is clear from their

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260. Saif-ur-Rehman Dar, op. cit, see also "Essay on the Arian Order of Architecture", in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol vii, 1848, p. 241-327.
261. Saif-ur-Rehman Dar, op. cit., p. 34.
262. T.H. Fyfe, Hellenistic Architecture, Cambridge, 1938, PP. 8, 148, 151, 152; see also, Sir John Marshall *Taxila II*, pp. 699-728.
263. Dar, Op. cit., P. 36.
264. Daniel Schlumberger, "Parthian Art" in Ehsan Yarshater ed. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 3(2), P. 1051.
265. V. N. Drabu, *Saivagmas* plates 19 and 20.
266. Saifur Rehman Dar op. cit. PP. 99-143.
267. Taran, op. cit. P. 29.

coinage which carries the portraits of Greek gods and goddesses.[268] The Indo-Greeks promoted polytheism and added more gods and goddesses to the heathenic pantheons of Kashmir. Worshipping of images was so widespread among the Greeks that some scholars believe that idolatry was introduced in India by the Greeks.[269] However, we are told that one Greek ruler namely Mender was converted to Buddhism.[270]

The Greeks were also influenced by Zoroastrianism, Saivism and Vaisnavism as the first was the dominant belief in Bactria and the latter two in Gandhara and Taxila.[271] Thus Kashmir became a hub of syncretic religion and culture.

***Science:*** Indian astronomy and astrology were greatly benefited by the contacts with the Greeks. Significantly the *horashastra* used for astrology in Sanskrit was derived from the Greek term horoscope.[272] That Kashmir was greatly profited from Greek sciences, it is no wonder that the Kashmiri tradition, preserved by the 11th century polymath, Ksemendra, credits them with working wonders.[273]

***Language:*** The profound impact of Greek culture on Kashmir is also borne out by the Kashmiri language which still possesses some Greek words namely *kur* (Greek *kori* = girls), *piala* ( Greek *phiali* =

268. P. L. Gupta, op. cit. P.
269. *The Cambridge History of Iran,* op. cit, Intr. p. XXV
270. *Milindapanha*., op. cit., pp. 82-83.
271. Taran, op. cit. PP. 25-32.
272. Levi, Quid de Graecis, P.23.
273. Taran, op. cit., p. 386.

cup), *kukur* (Greek *kokaras*= cock), *gunnia* (*gonie* = angle, corner, carpenters L – shaped instrument for right angles) etc.[274]

**Sakas and Parthians**

Around 75 B.C the immediate neighbourhood of Kashmir situated on its northern and western borders came under the occupation of a powerful Central Asian nomadic tribe called Sakas or Scythians. Basically an Iranian race, the Sakas lived in an area which falls within modern Kirgizia[275]. After about half a century rule the Sakas were replaced by yet another tribe known as Parthians who came from the area bordering Iran and Central Asia.[276] No sooner did the Sakas and the Parthians establish their control over the areas bordering the north and west of Kashmir, than they crossed over to occupy the valley of Kashmir. Some precious coins belonging to Saka and Parthian rulers have been found at different places in Kashmir and are preserved in S.P.S Museum, Srinagar.[277] It may however be rightly asked how the simple presence of coins can prove the political control of Sakas and Parthians in Kashmir. Yet it can be safely argued that when the Sakas could reach as far as upper Deccan and western India and establish their rule there, how could the beautiful Vale of Kashmir, situated in the neighbourhood of Gandhara, Taxila and Chilas – the Saka strongholds, remain outside the scheme of their expansionist policy. The Indo-Parthian empire

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274. Wani Aman Ashraf, Op. cit. P. 159-60.
275. Burchard Brentjes, *Arms of the Sakas,* p. 4.
276. Puri, B.N., "The Sakas and Indo-Parthians" in *History of Civilizations in Central Asia*, Vol. II. The Development of Nomadic Civilizations, 700 B.C to A.D 250 UNESCO, 1994, pp. 190-207.
277. Kak, R. C., *Catalogue of Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of S.P.S. Museum*, p.

was also spread over a vast area including Qandhar, Seistan, Kabul Valley, Sindh and Gandhara.[278] There are many place names in Kashmir which are either related to the Parthian rulers or Parthian cities or Parthian religion. For example Gund (after the Parthian ruler, Gondaphares), Gous (after Abdagases, the Parthian ruler), Zewan (after Zeioneses, the Parthian ruler), Dur (after the famous Parthian city Dura-Europos), Ash Muqam, Ash Ash Pur, Ash Mucch (after the Pre-eminent Zoroastrian goddess Ashi), Hari Parbat, Harwan, Harwat (after the sacred Zoroastrian mountain, Hara). The Parthian presence in Kashmir is also borne out by the famous archaeological site – Harwan.

**Nature of the Saka – Parthian Culture**

The Sakas and the Parthians almost belonged to the same culture. Both belonged to the Iranian race and both spoke Iranian language.[279] Though the Parthians were culturally more advanced than the Sakas, but by the time they reached Kashmir they were thoroughly influenced by the Parthian culture as they had lived for a considerable time in a world that was dominated by the imperial Parthians (Arascids). The Parthian culture was basically a syncretic culture drawn from different sources. Yet the Grecco – Iranian elements were prominent.[280]

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[278]. B.N. Puri, op.cit., pp. 190-207.
[279]. Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), op.cit., vol. 3 (I), p. 190-210.
[280]. Ibid

## IMPACT

***Immigrations and Settlements***: The Saka- Parthian period witnessed new waves of immigrations encouraged by the rulers to create a local supporting base and to integrate the local people culturally with the ruling class. The settlements bearing Parthian names[281] testify to the large scale immigrations and settlements of the people during the period. It further enriched the composite culture of Kashmir besides increasing its population and exerting pressures to bring new lands under cultivation.

***Trade:*** The presence of Saka and Parthian coins in Kashmir shows it clearly that the commercial relations with the neighbouring world, which had been maintained since long, were further promoted during the Saka-Parthian rule. It seems that the Saka- Parthian period exercised a great demand for war horses, gold, silver and bronze as these were the characteristic traits of Scythian and Parthian culture.[282]

***Military Technology and Strategy:*** Like other nomadic people of Central Asia, the power of the Sakas and the Parthians rested on cavalry, availability of a large number of horses, spread of their armies and the availability of their leaders.[283] As the Romans were invincible on foot, so the Sakas and Parthians were invincible on

281. Mentioned in on p. No.
282. Burchard Brentjes, op. cit., P. 5.
283. Ibid.

horseback.[284] The Parthians were unrivalled as mounted archers who were able to shoot while riding at full speed. Also, they pretended to flee, and suddenly turned round and aimed their deadly arrows at their pursuers. This is called "Parthian shot[285]". The arms of the Sakas and Parthians were the bow and the arrow, the lance and the javelin, the dagger and the sword. They used helmets and armours.[286]

The first clear evidence of the transfer of Saka – Parthian military technology to Kashmir comes from Harwan tiles. These tiles show a horse fully accoutered and horseman in armour riding at full gallop and drawing his bow. These tiles contain Kharoshti numerals and horseman represented on the tiles bears Central Asian physiognomy and appears in Parthian dress and Turkoman caps.

**Architecture and Art**

***Architecture:*** The Saka-Parthian period is remarkable for the development of a syncretic architecture and art in which Greek, West Asian and Parthian elements are prominent.[287] During the Parthian period remarkable progress was made in stone, wood and tile work. Gondaphares, the Parthian ruler introduced new building methods including a strong form of diaper masonary while rebuilding Taxila.[288] The impact of Parthian architecture is visible in Kashmir too; and the most importance evidence in this regard is

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284. Ott o Kurz, "Cultural Relations between Parthia and Rome" in *The Cambridge History of Iran* Vol. 3 p.561
285. Ibid.
286. *Arms of the Sakas*, op. cit., p. 66-70.
287. Dar, op. cit., pp. 31-32, 101.
288. B. N. Puri, Op. cit Vol. II, P. 205.

provided by Harwan ruins. First of all, we see here a typical example of hybrid architecture and art as the impact of not less than six civilizations is noticed here.[289] Secondly, the diaper masonary which is seen here as the main mode of construction actually developed at Taxila under Gondophares.[290] Thirdly, the overall plan of Harwan is similar to the fire temple at Surkh Kotal (pl. 35, fig. 124&125) (Bactria).[291] The apsidal temple found there resembles with the temples found at Dura-Europos (a famous Parthian site) and Sirkap – the Greeco-Parthian city.[292] The tile work which is a remarkable feature of Harwan site has some striking affinities with the Parthian tile work.[293]

Amorous scenes, wine drinking, dancing and musical representation are seen on some tiles of Harwan. It should be remembered that under the influence of Hellenistic culture, the art of bacchanalian scenes had thrived during Parthians in North- West India.[294]

***Art:*** Parthian art was characterized by some distinguishing features, namely, 'the frontality' of human and animal figures whereby all figures are portrayed full face and in frontal representation, neglect of the body (in contrast to Greek art), linearity of contour, painstaking depiction of details of dress, ornament, furniture, ethnic

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289. "…. The motifs of these tiles suggest the impact of half a dozen civilizations of the ancient world. Such are the Barhut railing, the greek "swag", the sassanian foliated bird, the Persian vase, the Roman rosette, the Chinese fret, the Indian elephants the Assyrian Lion, with figures of dancers, musicians cavaliers, ascetics and racial types from many sources as may be seen by their costumes and accessories". Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, p.154.
290. Puri, op. cit., p. 205.
291. Daniel Schlomberger, op.cit., p. 1044.
292. Wani, Aman Ashraf, op. cit., p.184, fn. 73.
293. Banday, Ajaz Ahmad, pp. 2-4.
294. Dar, op. cit., p. 101.

characteristics, spirituality, scenes of hunt, combat or chase and portrayal of figures on horses at a flying gallop (Parthian shot).[295]

The evidence of the impact of this art on Kashmir is evident from the moulded tiles of Harwan and the terracottas found at Semthan and Ushkur.

***Religion:*** A striking feature of the Saka-Parthian rule is that they showed equal regard to Greek religion, Buddhism, Brahmanism and Zoroastrianism which is quite clear from their coins as well as from the epigraphic evidence.[296] However, as Zoroastrianism was the dominant religious belief of the Parthian world which had also influenced the Sakas, it gained considerable foot hold in Kashmir during the period.[297] This is suggested by a large body of evidence coming from a variety of sources. First, it has been persuasively argued that Harwan was basically a sacred place of Zoroastrianism; and it was at a later stage that the place was appropriated by Buddhism.[298] There are also a number of places named after Zoroastrian gods and goddesses. For example, Mitargom (village of Mitra). Mitra is the Iranian divine being, Mir (Mihr), Aur, Akhur (Ahura), Anich Dur (Anahita Durra), 'Ash Muchh, 'Ash Muqam ( after Aśi goddess) Harwan, Hari Parbat (after Hara, the sacred mountain in Zoroastrianism), Varih-haran (Varhran).

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295. M.I. Rostovotzeff, "Dura and the Problems of Parthian art" in *Yale Classical Studies* – 5 (1935), PP. 155-304.

296. Gupta, P. L., op. cit., 25-31.

297. Gulshan Majid, "The Frove: A connecting link between Zoroastrianism and Kashmir." In The *Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, 1996, P.62.

298. Ibid.

Other significant example of Zoroastrian presence in Kashmir are frov- a popular festival celebrated in south Kashmir and *roohan posh* (lit. flowers of souls) – a popular ritual practised by Kashmiri Muslims.[299]

The Sakas also introduced sun worship in Kashmir as they were originally sun and bull worshippers. The priests who accompanied the Sakas and introduced sun worship in India are called Magians or Magas.[300] That Maga was a common name in Kashmir is evidenced by the fact that the Muslim name Maqbul came to be popularly called as Maga in Kashmir.

**Period 4$^{th}$ –Kushans, Kidara Kushans and Huns (1$^{st}$ to 6$^{th}$ century A.D.)**

With an average deposit of about 4m, this period reveals information regarding the different phases. In the first phase the following findings have been encountered.

1. This period is characterized by a distinct pottery which ranges from fine to coarse red. The important shapes are bowls, long necked vases, lid cum dish internally hallow and out turned rims, jars of dull red ware with out curved horizontally sprayed out rims with a deep profile, pots with spherical body etc. the decorations on some of the shreds are simple and include appliqué, incised and stamped designs.
2. Among the important antiquities are terracotta, semi precious stone, bone and shell beads, terracotta balls, clay sealing's with

[299]. Ibid.

[300]. Cartsten Colpe, "Development of Religious Thought" in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 3 (2), PP. 850- 51.

Brahmi and Kharoshti scripts, copper and silver coins of Kushan rulers.

3. The exposure of mud bricks rubble and diaper pebble walls with associated floor levels show building activity of the period. It may be mentioned that such mid brick structures were noticed in the excavations of Kushana sites in Ganga and Sutluj basins. The construction of diaper pebble walls was common place in Gandhara. Two brick tiles having cross within a circle were also recovered. The use of such brick tiles shows the beginning of highly rich decorative tiles, commonly found in all the Kushan sites in Kashmir.
4. A number of terracotta figures found at the site are significant as they throw light on the confluence of cultures in Kashmir. A noteworthy terracotta figure is of a headless standing figure of a Bodhistva wearing a sleeved tunic reaching to the knees having intermittent delineated folds usually running parallel to one another. Its right hand is probably raised in *abayamudra.* This goes in conformity with many of the Gandhara sculptures of the period. The other is a bearded and mustached head probably of a warrior with chubby cheeks and protruding elongated eyes. The hairdo is noteworthy. The facial features indicate Indo-Sassanian influence. And the sculpture indicates close similarity with Gandhara prototypes. A seated figure with folded feet touching each other in contemplative mood, wears folded drapery and scarves covering the back of the head in typical

central Asian style having prominent eyes long beard and hairdo.[301]

In the next phase change both in structural and ceramic sides is noteworthy. It is marked by post Kushan period. The structures are marked by rubble stones and the floors are even paved with small sized rubble stones. The pottery also presents new types often treated with bright red slip the main shapes are bowls with tapering sides and footed bases, variety of goblets, water vessels without turned, internally thickened and sharpened rims. Terracotta finds include both human and animal figures. These undoubtedly portray Gupta influence. The top most deposit of this period also yielded several coins of Hun rulers.[302]

Indeed after the Saka Parthians Kashmir came under successive occupation of Kushans, Kidarites and Huns. Apart from the Semthan finds this fact is supported by a variety of sources –archaeological, numismatic and literary sources. A number of Kushan sites have been spotted in Kashmir, a brief description of which will be given in the following pages. Besides, the coins of a number of Kushana rulers from Khujala Khadphises to Vasudeva have been found at various places in the valley.[303] A large number of Kushana coins found at various sites are preserved in S.P.S museum in Srinagar. The *Rajtarangni* of Kalhana also makes mention of Kushan rule in Kashmir though Kalhana makes mention of only three Kushan rulers namely *Huvishka*, *Jushka* and *Kanishka* and their activities especially

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[301]. G.S. Gaur, op. cit, IAR, 1980-81, P. 21.

[302]. G.S. Gaur, op. cit., p. 22.

[303]. Kak, R.C., *Hand Book of the Archaeological and Numismatic sections of S.P.S Museum*, Calcutta, 1933, P. 11.

the building of capitals after their names and the patronage they extended to Buddhism.[304]

The motifs on some Hoinar tiles representing two winged lions locked in a fierce combat have a parallel in Iran at Qateh-i-Yazdigird, a Parthian site.[114] It is reminiscent of ancient Mesopotamian tradition.[115] Such motifs are reported to have come from Nuristan in Afghanistan as well; and have been often encountered in Scythian burials.[116]

[304]. *Rajatarangini*, I, P. 173.

[11]4. J. L. Bhan, "Iconographic Interaction between Kashmir and Central Asia" in B.K. Koul Deambi (ed), *Kashmir and Central Asia*, p. 77.

[115.] Ibid.

[116]. Ibid.

**CHAPTER VI**

# Sculpture: Search for Affinities

The artistic products of Kashmir reflect a synthesis of diverse stylistic elements as Kashmir has been in the successive historical periods the meeting ground of many cultures. Not surprisingly therefore, her sculptural and architectural contributions show a harmonious blending of the diverse idioms. The sculptural art of Kashmir is mainly modified by influences from Gandhara, Iran and inner Asia. In the list of sixteen *Mahajanapadas* the Buddhist texts mention Kasmira-Gandhara as one political unit in the pre-Asokan days, which continued to be so as is evident by the Greek records in which *Kaspapyros / Kasyapapura (Kasmira)* is described as a Gandhara city.[305]

The sculptural art of pre-historic Kashmir stands out in contrast to the latter art for its dynamism and naturalism.[306] The prehistoric site of Burzahom scientifically excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India has brought to light an artistic activity of the Neolithic people who inhabited the valley as early as 2375 BC. Among large artifacts of bone, metal and terracotta is a stone panel pertaining to 1700 BC (pl. 6, fig. 25), depicting a hunting scene and this is the only sculpture produced at any excavated site of this period in India so far. It is often maintained that the Neolithic Kashmir had no parallels in the subcontinent but had links with central Asia. This is equally true of early historic period of Kashmir.

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[305]. Kalhana's *Rajtarangni*, M.A. Stein Delhhi, 1979,i.p.27 and On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, Thomas Watters, 1904, p.261. Kashmir appears to have had a close association with Gandhara as Kalhana mentions a land grant by the white Hun King Mihirkula to a community of Gandhara Brahmans settled there. Ibid., I,312-16.

[306]. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p.11.

The tiles found at *Hoinar* and *Hutamur* by the state department of Archaeology bear some hunting scenes, flower designs, etc., but the most intriguing motif relates to a figure of two winged lions with their intertwined necks (pl. 23, fig. 70) showing some earlier tradition of west Asia that gets a parallel from Qateh Yazgrad (pl. 23, fig. 71), a Parthian site in Iran, probably belonging to second century BC.[307]

In 200 BC, Kashmir became a settlement of Indo-Greeks, as is confirmed by the finds excavated at Semthan in Vijabror, about 45kms from Srinagar. Semthan excavations not only yielded well developed pottery, which ranges from fine to coarse and red but also some of the pottery shards have simple decorations including appliqué, incised and stamped designs in contrast to earlier mat designs of Neolithic period. Apart from this terracotta, semi precious stones, bone and shell beads, clay seals in Brahmi and Kharoshti scripts and silver coins of Kushan rulers. Besides beautiful terracotta figurines made from single moulds have also been found, belonging to the Parthian and Indo-Greek periods. Among many beautiful terracotta figures displaying Hellenistic and other traditions we come across a headless standing image wearing a sleeved tunic reaching down to his knees (pl. 31, fig. 115, a male head with prominent moustaches (pl. 30, fig. 113) is indicating close similarity with Gandhara prototype. A number of images, possibly of *Anahita*, an Iranian fertility Goddess have been found during excavations and one such in perfect condition is preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford and Central Asian Museum, university of Kashmir.[308]

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307. Bhan, J. L. , *Iconographic Interactions,* op. cit., p. 77.
308. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p. 17.

The terracotta objects of Ushkur (pl. 27 & 28) pertaining to the 5th/6th century AD and Akhnoor of 7th century AD represent the most ebullient phase of Kashmiri art tradition pointing to the art of Gandhara and Mathura as the fore bearer of Kashmiri style. Ushkur in Baramula and Akhnoor in Jammu represent two famous sites that have yielded a number of terracotta's belonging to the Buddhist temples.[309] While Ushkur retained all Hellenistic influence or are modeled after Gandhara, the Akhnoor created different school of *aroque* terracotta's and yielded a large number of fragmentary images of Buddhist creed.[310] The terracotta heads found at Ushkur representing ancient Hushkapura built by the Kushana king Huvishka bear striking resemblance to the later Gandhara art (pl. 27, 28 & 29). The terracotta head of Upasika or a lay devotee (pl. 27, fig. 94) from Ushkur, her face, nose, sensitive nostrils, soft delicate lips, the soft gaze, intensified by the up turned pose of the face show with what a feeling of devotion the master artist of ancient Kashmir captured these sentimental movements in the plastic art. The stucco figures found in the ancient sites of Ushkur, Akhnoor, Hadda, Fonduskistan, Begram, Andnatepa, Airtam, Kizil and Dandan Uluk Khotan display striking affinity in their style which point to a common artistic tradition that overwhelmed the whole region. The terracotta's dating between fifth century AD and seventh century AD recently located at Latehpura presents a beautiful synthesis of Gandhara and Gupta traditions.[311]

Very few stone sculptures have been found that belong to the pre-Karkota period, yet an image of Karttikeya (6th century AD) from Vijabror preserved in the S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar and a Laksmi image

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309. Goetz, Herman, *Marg,* 1955.
310. Kak, R.C., op. cit., p. 152-154.
311. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p. 23.

(pl. 32, fig. 118) from Papaharanag (6th century AD), Anantnag documents the existence of a mature stone sculpture idiom from that time. The relatively Hellenistic treatment of both these images is reminiscent of Kushan period works from Gandhara and Bactria revealing artistic debt to that tradition.[312]

Puranadhisthana present Pandrethan according to the Rajatarangini, witnessed considerable building activity during the reign of Pravarasena I,[313] in the middle of 6th century AD. Pravarasena I was the son of King Meghavana of restored Gonandity dynasty who was brought to Kashmir from Gandhara in the middle of 6th century A.D.[314] The king constructed a temple of Pravaresvara siva along with Matrcakras.[315] Hiuen Tsiang refers to a monastery with more than 300 monks and a sacred Stupa, believed to have been built over the tooth relic of Buddha at Pandrethan.[316] Daya Ram Sahni, a noted archaeologist, excavated the site in the year 1913 and found two dilapidated stone stupas and a quadrangular rubble built enclosure assignable to the 7th century A.D. Its drum appeared to have been decorated with stone sculpture of more than life which displayed forceful execution. Among other images of Buddhist creed, he located some outstanding Brahminical images also which are presently preserved in the S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar.[317] Beginning also after the 7th century a distinct Kashmiri style began to emerge, as evidenced by a spectacular, large scale, lime stone sculpture dated to the 7th century of the Brahminical and Buddhist images from Pandrethan. While the

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312. Ibid, p. 24.
313. *Rajatarangini,* op. cit., Vol. I, p. 104.
314. Ibid, pp. 97-101.
315. Ibid, pp. 97-101.
316. Beal, *Life of Hieun Tsang,* p. 69.
317. Kak, R.C., *Catalogue of Archaeology and Numismatic Section of S.P.S. Museum,* op. cit., p.

drapery and armoury given to various images display Hellenistic influences as found in Gandhara, their faces jewellery, Mudras etc. are based on the Gupta idiom.[318] From seventh or eighth century onwards the sculptures of Kashmir acquired distinct feature when it emerged as a political kingdom in the north India. Before this period the whole region from Kashmir and Gandhara to Bamyan, central Asia and southern peripheries of Iran were under an unbroken chain of tradition which interlocked all the flourishing centers of trade and travel contemporaneous to each other.[319]

The most glorious age of Kashmir sculptural art coincides with the rule of Karkota dynasty especially during the 8th century AD, when Kashmir rose to the heights of power.[320] The sculptors had by this time acquired a thorough knowledge of iconography and were able to give expression to a great range of movement and gesture. They were able to give material form to their visions by their masterly handling of various mediums creating a form of art unparalleled elsewhere.[321] Lalitaditya (A.D 715-56) built some of the largest and most magnificent temples, which amongst others include the Sun temple at Martanda and those structures built at his famous capital at Parihaspura. The sculptures from Parihaspura are comparable to the post Gupta sculptures from North India in their plastic qualities, though regional features are present in details.[322] The development of sculptural art in this period is not found in earlier periods because of the preoccupation of earlier kings with the intricacies of political affairs of their states. The sculptures of Karkota period achieved a refinement in carving, vigor and grace that are

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318. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p. 25.
319. Ibid, p. 25.
320. Kak, R.C. , *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,* op. cit., pp. 146-149.
321. Ibid.
322. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p. 34.

unequalled in Indian art.[323] Lalitaditya commissioned artists from Kannauj, Bengal and Deccan, besides artists from China and Rome.[324] Goetz has drawn our attention to the prevailing crisis in contemporary Byzantine Empire, which eventually led to migration of Syrian and Roman artists towards East and some of them seem to have been given refuge by the king Lalitaditya, who ushered in an era of glory and prosperity for the kingdom.[325] The various and extensive conquests of Lalitaditya brought new elements and influences in the existing art of this area, as some master artists of these troubled and unstabilized regions were recruited during his time for various artistic activities, which is very well documented by the various art forms produced during this period, which made Kashmir for the time being the most powerful empire that India had seen since the days of the Gupta period.[326]

The sculptures of Parihaspura seems to have been modeled after the Chinese provincial art in Khotanese work or the late offshoot of the Wei style as can be observed from the few Buddhist images preserved in the S.P.S Museum, Srinagar.[327] Among them the crowned Buddha images from Parihasapura are based on Chinese models not only because of facial features but the triangular cape and having shoulder effulgence. The art of Martanda and Parihasapura adds a new chapter to the iconographical framework of Kashmir and Central Asia. Tang influence finally crystallized during the Lalitaditya period, while trefoil arch appeared in its full form. The colonnaded peristyles took birth in Kashmir due to presence of various artists from various areas that carved with their own physiognomy. The dress of Surya image of

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[323]. Ibid, p. 34, Kak, R.C., op. cit., p. 146.
[324]. *Rajataranagni,* Vol. V, pp. 97-100.
[325]. Goetz, H., *The Medieval Sculptures of Kasmir,* in Marg, 1955.
[326]. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p. 34.
[327]. Goetz, H, op. cit.,

Cleveland Museum of Art, USA and the National Museum, New Delhi consisting of long gown and of triangular cape etc., emphasizes the Persian and central Asian influences on the sculptural art of Kashmir. This did not confine to Brahminical images alone but we find such influences on the Buddhist images of Parihasapura as well. The extraneous influences are observed on the famous Avaloketisvara image of Queen Didda of tenth century AD reminding us of a few bronzes of Nalanda thereby confirming Kalhana's account that Lalitaditya imported a number of artists from Eastern India during his advance as far as Garuda now in Bangladesh.[328] There was no part of India where Lalitaditya did not erect statues and temples of Gods. A very long enumeration ensues of these proofs of his liberality and founded cities.[329]

Under king Avantivarman (AD 855/6-883), a new dynasty rose to power and Kashmir became strong and prosperous state and her consummate sculptural art flourished under his benign rule.[330] Among other religious gifts to Brahmans, Avantivarman founded the city of Avantipura in which he raised two temples dedicated to Siva and Visnu and became famous by the names of Avantisvamin.[331] Fortunately at Avantipura, the ninth century AD temple of Avantisvamin (visnu) with profusely carved figures and designs has at least a few important carved panels saved from ruination.

The Brahminical sculptures from Avantipur show a perceptible change from the earlier tradition in these sculptures as they do not bear the calmness and inner bliss.[332] Sculptures from Avantipur exhibit both a

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[328]. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol, I, 2010, p. 38.
[329]. Ibid, p. 38.
[330]. *Rajatarangini,* VIII, p. 1430.
[331]. Ibid.
[332]. Kak, R.C. , *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,* pp. 118-125.

variety in iconographic types and a relatively wide range of stylistic conventions and are more earth bound and instead of exhibiting compassion show wrath and a force.[333] During this period, the Chinese influences steadily faded away and the God who was hitherto a savior is transformed into a master. The images produced during this period exhibit both variety in iconographic types and as relatively wide range of stylistic conventions.[334]

In conclusion it may be asserted that borrowing ideas from such contiguous areas such as Gandhara, Mathura and central Asia, Kashmiri artists created iconic types of their own to suit their peculiar religious needs. Iconographic and stylistic features distinct from the artistic traditions of Indian plains characterize the sculpture of Kashmir.

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333. Ibid.
334. Bhan, J. L., *Kashmir Sculpture,* Vol., I, 2010, p. 41.

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